National Biography

LALLESHWARI

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The Prayer

*"Call Him Shiva, Keshava, Brahma, Or the Buddha,
By whatever name you choose to call
The ONE universal BEING of many names;
May He my afflictions remove, my darkness change to LIGHT !"*

—LALLESHWARI

Preface

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY has seen a fresh wave of interest in Lalladed and her VAKHS About 200 years ago, one scholar-saint of Kashmir, Pandit Rajanak Bhaskaracharya, collected sixty Lalla-Vakhs and translated them into Sanskrit verse From the language and content of these vakhs, we are left in no doubt that they are authentic Some of these are set down here in Appendix B. In 1920, Sir George Grierson and Lionel D. Barnett did yeoman service in restoring as many as 109 Vakhs with the help of local Pandits, rendering them into English and presenting them in a book-form, entitled Lalla Vakyayani or the Wise Sayings of Lalla Ded. This is a valuable book on the subject, and was first published by Royal Asiatic Society, London It includes the sixty vakhs collected by Rajanak Bhaskaracharya Sir Richard Temple wrote an erudite introduction on the topic and rendered the vakhs into English verse in a book entitled THE WORD OF LALLA, THE PROPHETESS.

Since then many admirers of the saint have collected many more vakhs and published these, translating them into Hindi and Urdu and English. Significant among them have been Professor N.L. Koul (Talib) and Pandit Anand Koul Bamzai, scholars and prominent citizens of Srinagar. All these editions and old manuscript chronicles, usually written in Persian, have helped build this biography of Lalla-ded which by no means can claim to be perfect, since the sources have been scanty and lacking in detail. Tradition has played a great part in providing material relevant for this purpose. Way back in January 1971, *Kashur Samāchār*, a trilingual Monthly published from Delhi, brought out its Lalla-Ded

Number which presented at one place the Vakhs together with their English and Hindi renderings by Sarvashri J.N. Bhan and S.N. Bhatt, members of the Editorial Board of the journal. An attempt has again been made to put together at one place all that is known about this saint poetess of renown and all that may be of interest to the common reader.

I acknowledge my gratitude to all those authors and their publishers whose books have been consulted for writing this biographical sketch. I also acknowledge my thanks to my brother, Pandit J.P. Parimoo, who read through the typed scripts and assisted me and to Prof. C.L. Sapru who lent me his Journal of *Kashur Samachar* of 1971.

B.N.P.

Contents

		Page
Preface		*vii*
The Key to Kashmiri Vowel and Consonant Sounds		*xi*
1.	Political and Social Surroundings	1
2.	Her Early Years	5
3	Married Life	10
4.	The Preceptor's Beneficence	17
5.	Spiritual Perfection	23
6.	Her Miracles	26
7.	Her Philosophy and Teachings	33
8.	As an Ideal of Womanhood	39
9.	Lalleśwari—The Pioneer of Bhakti Movement	44
10.	Lalleśwari and Bhakta Kabir	50
11.	The Language of the Lalla-Vakh	57
Appendix A —Miscellaneous Vakhs of Lalla-Ded		62
Appendix B —Some of the Vakhs translated into Sanskrit and English		74
Bibliography		85

Key to Kashmiri Sounds

1. *Diacritical marks for the VOWEL sounds :—*

ā the long sound as in class, farm. (आ)
ī the long sound as in see, tea. (ई)
i The suppressed sound of i, usually at the end of a word.
ō The long sound of o, as in bold, hold. (ओ)
o The suppressed sound of o.
ū The long sound of u, as in too, rule. (ऊ)
ei The long, vowel sound as of 'a' in take, cake. (ए)
ai The dipthong as in lie, tie, my. (ऐ)
ṅ The nasal sound as in long, song. (अ)

2. *Sounds peculiar to Kashmiri* :

ȧ Suppressed 'a' sound
a Elongated sound of the above
ạ Suppressed 'a' sound produced with downward pharyngal breath.
a Elongated sound of the above.

3. *Consonants peculiar to Kashmiri* :

ts (च)
tsh (छ)

To my late Brother

Pandit Prem Nath Parimoo

CHAPTER I

Political and Social Surroundings

THE RICH culture and profound religious philosophy of India has had innumerable sources From time immemorial, the VEDAS and the UPANISHADS have cast our mind in a particular mould The great capacity of the Indian people to own and absorb alien thought and way of life, our spirit of tolerance and fellow-feeling, our approach to problems of life through religious humanism are the result of the teachings of our sages, saints and seers over the ages. Through self-discipline and meditation these great men and women gained spiritual insight into the ultimate Reality and helped people understand the meaning and purpose of life. We may well call them our ethical mentors and spiritual beacons. One of the pre-eminent among them is LALLESHWARI of Kashmir.

The long passage of time since she lived has not dimmed the aura around her. She is remembered with veneration today as ever by the Kashmiris—Hindus and Muslims, alike. She was a saint as well as poet. People recite her poetry called LALLA-VAKH with zest, when in despair, and with pleasure To a Kashmiri, the Lalla-vakhs are a perennial source of spiritual knowledge and moral guidance in the day-to-day conduct of life But, before we trace a sketch of her life, it may be worthwhile getting a glimpse of the times in which she was born and in which she lived A brief review of the socio-political *milieu* of the century may lend colour and perspective to her personality.

By the turn of the thirteenth century A D., the glory of the Hindu rule in Kashmir had waned completely The famous rulers like

LALITADITYA, AVANTIVARMAN and QUEEN DIDDA had become great names of the past. In the economic, social and political scene of the Valley, autumn had already set in. "Signs of internal decay began to manifest themselves with the establishment of Lohara dynasty in 1003 A.D. Henceforth the Hindu rule in Kashmir started on its downward course. The kings who occupied the throne were for the most part weak and worthless and allowed themselves to be dominated by low favourites and corrupt ministers. The Dāmars or feudal chiefs were powerful. They defied the royal authority and, by their constant revolt, plunged the country into confusion. Life and property were not safe. Agriculture declined. There were periods when trade came to a standstill. Socially and morally too, the court and country had sunk to depths of degradation."[1] Court intrigues resulted in dethroning or poisoning or the assassination of several kings.

As if the internal rot of the Kashmiri people was not enough, a fateful event took place in the year 1320 A.D A Mongol or Tartar, Zulju or Dulacha by name, burst upon the country at the head of 70,000 horsemen during the reign of king Sahadeva. Different historians have recorded the devastation caused by Zulju's invasion. "The blackened remains of ruined homes told the tale of the conqueror's cruelties."[2] "Depopulated, uncultivated and grainless, the country of Kashmir offered, as it were, the sight of primeval chaos"[3] Fearstricken and helpless, king SAHADEVA fled to Kishtwar, a district of Jammu and Kashmir today, to the north-east of the Valley across the mountains.

Then Rinchen, a Bhauṭṭa prince from Ladakh, whom Sahadeva had given asylum, killed Sahadeva's commander-in-chief by a ruse. He married the commander-in-chief's daughter, Kota Rani, and became the ruler of Kashmir. He died after only three and a-half years. On his death Udyanadeva, the former king Sahadeva's brother, returned from his hiding with an army, married the widowed Kota Rani and was crowned the king.

On the death of Udyanadeva, Kota Rani could not hold her own for long. The kingdom of Kashmir passed on to SHAH MIR,

[1]Mohibul Hassan· Kashmir Under The Sultans· published by Ali Mohammad and Sons, Srinagar 1959, page 30.

[2]Mohibul Hassan, p 34.

[3]Jonaraja *Rajatarangini*, edited by Prof S K Kaul, st. 163.

who had been received well and promoted as a courtier by Sahadeva, and Shah Mir ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Shamas-ud-Din, in the year 1339 A.D. With this was ushered in a new era of Muslim rule in Kashmir. For the rest of the century, times were full of stress and strain for the people A religio-cultural upheaval took place

It was during the time of Udyanadeva that Lalleshvari was born, most probably. Great men and women of the world are usually thrown up by the exigencies of their time and place Their lives become monuments to their humanity and genius. It is likely that Lalla-ded came upon the scene to redress the sufferings of the people around her and to ameliorate their condition Through her vakhs, she must have brought solace to the bruised hearts of the people among whom she lived Great saints are born to help overcome human insanity, mitigate people's sufferings and put them on the right path of true knowledge. The LALLA-VAKH must have acted as a healing balm to the people of her time.

Besides, Lalleshwari appears to have stood far above the social and religious *milieu*, like a granite rock above the stormy waters lashing against the shores. Spiritual geniuses like her belong to the whole world. They sing for humanity and their teachings have permanent relevance. They are eternal benefactors of mankind.

History is silent about her biography. The great historians nearer her times, like Jonaraja, Shrivara, Prajaybhaṭṭa, Shuka and even the Persian chroniclers have not a word to say about her life. Only the Persian chroniclers[1] of a much later date and some

[1]Histories and Chronicles in Persian in which references to Lalla-ded are found and which have been consulted in this regard .—

(*a*) *Tazkirat-al-'Ar feen* : Baba Ali Raina , 970 Hijri.
(*b*) *Baharistan-i-Shahi* (author not known) , 1023 H.
(*c*) *History of Kashmir* Malik Haider Chadorvi , 1029 H.
(*d*) *Noor-nama* · Baba Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi ; 1047 H.
(*e*) *Asrar-al-Abrar* Baba Davud Mishkvati ; 1063 H.
(*f*) *Navadir-al-Akhbar* · Rafi-ud-Din Ahmad ; 1136 H.
(*g*) *Waqiat-i-Kashmir* (History) : Khwaja Mohammad 'Azam Dedamari ; 1159 H/1747 A D.
(*h*) History of Kashmir . Birbal Kachroo ; 1835 A.D.
(*i*) History of Kashmir : Pir Ghulam Hassan Khuyihami , vol. III (Urdu) 1885 A D

Note The above manuscripts and published books are available for consultation in the Research Library of the University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar.

Noornāmas give us a cursory account of this saint of miraculous powers. They say that she was God-mad and self-absorbed Their references to her are inadequate and appear to have been based on tradition and hearsay.

Therefore, in the absence of any historical evidence, it has been a veritable problem to draw a biographical sketch of this saint-poetess of national importance The material of the life-sketch given in the following pages has been gleaned from tradition and folklore, by and large In such cases tradition and folklore may very reasonably serve the purpose of history. References in the Persian chronicles and *Noornāmas* too, have been incorporated and valuable cues taken from her extant body of verse, duly sifted and sorted out.

CHAPTER II

Her Early Years

THERE IS a village called SEMPUR in the Kashmir Valley. It is situated at a distance of about eleven kilometres to the south of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir State. Moving out of Srinagar on the Srinagar-Jammu national Highway, we leave behind in succession the Army Cantonment at Badamibagh, the stone-quarries of Athwajan, a number of stone-crushers and heaps of gravel by the road-side, and lastly a small wayside village named Pāntachhokh Here a small road branches out to the left, to Khonamuh and Loduv, making a fork with the highway. The fork opens out into a broad expanse of marshy land. At the southern end, the marsh rises into a dry, arable field which presents in spring a view of yellow mustard blossom and in summer a green patch of paddy crop.

Where the field ends, an abrupt rise in the highway begins. Hardly a hundred yards up the slope is Sempur, the birthplace of Lalleshwari Today, there is a ramshackle house on the roadside here Behind this house, in the interior, there are half-a-dozen old, god-forsaken houses clustered together and an almost equal number of newly-constructed houses of red, baked brick, roofed with corrugated iron sheets. On the roadside, as at Pāntachhokh, workers in stone are found busy chiselling soft stone, from Loduv quarries, into mortars of all sizes, flagstones with rough or polishd surfaces grave-stones of different shapes and designs, and prominently exhib ted tall, round stone-pillars made to order for smart porticoes of posh buildings in the city of Srinagar and elsewhere.

Nothing distinguishes SEMPUR today except a recently-set-up soap factory. Besides these, there is a large, tell-tale graveyard adorned with artistically sculptured grave-stones. It indicates that some day this village must have been a prosperous, well-populated locality. To the right of the highway, the ground slopes down to the river Jhelum which meanders its placid waters down to Srinagar. But for a solitary, large, recently-built house, the whole sloping bank is covered with a leafy orchard The foreground by the roadside is littered with slabs of stone

They say that old Sempur stood on the river bank a little way up the stream. Six hundred and fifty-seven years ago, Lalleshwari, the most celebrated saint and poetess of Kashmir, saw the light here, on the night of the fullmon of Bhadon, 1382 Bikrami era, corresponding roughly to September 1326 A.D There are different versions of her date of birth. But, in view of historical and other considerations, the one given here is the most probable year. The date has been taken from tradition.

She was born to a Kashmiri Brahman History does not tell us what his name was. But he had a name after all. One Pandit Ramchand Malla calls him Chandra Bhatt He does so in a small booklet in Urdu about Lalla-ded. Pandit Ramchand Malla was an official of the Revenue Department of the Kashmir Government One does not know from where he has picked this name. He attributes his information to one Devi Bhagat Ji Maharaj. Let us, therefore, call Lalla's father Chandra Bhatt The name does not make much difference It is said that he was a fairly well-off landowner of the village He must have been a pious man, too. The BHAGAVAD GITA says that "those who do not accomplish yoga in their life-time, despite their best efforts, take their birth in the house of a Yogi or a pious man."[1]

Life at Sempur was simple then. It is not easy for us to guess how simply the people lived, particularly the village-folk. Science and material progress have brought about a great change in our way of living, since then We enjoy the benefits of electricity and we use lots of electrical and electronic gadgets for our comfort. But six hundred years ago people burnt the resinous wood of fir and pine trees to light their rooms in the evening They also used earthen lamps with wicks and edible oil. The houses were plastered

[1]BHAGAVAD GITA Chapter VI, Verses 41-42

with mud and the use of cement was not known. The roofs of houses were thatched in the countryside and in the city and town the roofs were covered with overlapping sheets of birch-bark, overlaid with a thick layer of earth several inches deep Such a roof was a sign of prosperity of the family. In the villages such a roof was a rare sight. Water had to be drawn from the river, for the system of water-supply through taps was not yet built. People lived a life of contentment. Their daily needs were fewer than ours Surely they were more religious than we are and devoted much of their time to religious pursuits.

At Chandra Bhaṭṭ's house religious gatherings (*Sat-sang*), reading and recitation of scriptures and discussions on moot points were a daily routine. Children were introduced to the holy books early in life at home and in the local Pathshāllās. When the elders sat together, morning and evening, talking about religion or performing 'PUJA', children were not sent away. They had to be present at the religious ceremonies and rituals. Young Lalla was an ardent listener to the recitations from the holy books. It becomes evident from her later spiritual accomplishment that she had picked up the basic lessons taught in the BHAGAVAD GITA, the UPANISHADS and other sacred books such as the SHAIVA TANTRAS, early in life. She had grasped the fundamentals of Hindu religion.

The fullmoon night is regarded as auspicious for the worship of Shiva Her very birth, as it were, had cast her predilections. Her *Samskaras*, gathered in previous births, had chalked out her path of life The Lalla-Vakh show beyond a shadow of doubt that she had taken the worship of SHIVA seriously. She was a precocious child and a born saint, like Ādi-Shankarachārya, Shukadeva, Jesus Christ and many others who have made a name in the spiritual field. Consciously and unconsciously, she absorbed religious knowledge. From her very childhood, personal experience of Shiva became the most intense aspiration of her life. This desire was increased by her early contact with the family Guru, and her parental way of life. It is said that Chandra Bhaṭṭ used to visit the cave-temple of Shiva in the hill-side, called HARSHISH-VARA. It was only a walk of an hour or so from Sempur to Khonamuh, across the fields. This holy cave is visited by hundreds of Hindu pilgrims, particularly on the fullmoon night of Sāwan (August) every year, when thousands of Hindu devotees make the

tiresome journey to the holy cave of Shri Amarnatha. Of Lalla-ded, they say that she always accompanied her father to Harshis-hvara temple.

What religious practices she carried on, nobody can tell. Perhaps, she was too young to have any formal way of worship. Usually at the age of nine or ten, children only wonder at what the elders say or do. They may imitate them blindly. She may have yearned to see Shiva face to face. She was an introvert and thought over many eternal questions. What sort of a being was He who made this world : the earth so soft and productive ; the sky so full of stars and the bright, silvery moon at night, and the warm and bright sun during the day ? It was all so mysterious and difficult to understand. She says that she bothered the family priest with questions. When the elders talked of the VEDĀNTIC enunciation, "not this, not this," to formulate the ultimate REALITY, she asked the Guru what the name and form of the supreme Being was, after all. This innocent inquiry disturbed her from her early years. She was given to such introspection.

Kashmir has been famous for Sanskrit learning from olden days It is no wonder that Sir George Grierson, who made an intensive survey of languages in India, says in his report : "For upwards of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy". Before the advent of Islam in Kashmir, the learned books of Kashmir were written in Sanskrit.[1] At Sharada, (on the banks of the Kishenganga, now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir), and at VIJAYESHVARA (the present Vejibror in Anantnag District), there were universities of Sanskrit leārning. Hostels and Vihars were constructed for students coming from different parts of India to study Sanskrit and religious and other subjects. Queen Amritaprabha of Meghvahana "caused a lofty Vihara, called Amritabhavana, to be constructed for the benefit of foreign students", and Yaśkara (939-48 A D.), "fond of endowments, built on a piece of land, which had belonged to his father, a hostel (maṭh) for students from Ārya-deśa who were devoting themselves to knowledge."[2] Queen Didda (981-1003 A.D.) "built another convent for the residence of scholārs from the

[1] *Aina-i-Akbari* : Abu'l Fazl.
[2] Rajataringini ; Kalhana Edit. Stein ; Book IV, v. 87.

plains".[1] The people had gained a considerable mastery over the language and even women spoke Sanskrit fluently. It is said that when Buddhism spread in Kashmir, even the Buddhist "literature and religious books were written in Sanskrit".

It is easy to infer that young Lalla received her education in Sanskrit, either at home or at a formal school or a Paṭhshālla at Sempur. That she had a good grounding in Sanskrit, is apparent from her vakhs. They bear a clear testimony to this conclusion. Although she is the first among Kashmiri writers to use a near-modern Kashmiri language, her verse is full of Sanskrit diction and Sanskrit idiom. Her parents and her family priest must have been well-versed in *Advait* (non-dualistic) Shaivism. She did receive the first taste of this ancient philosophy of Kashmir from them.

It is said that Abhinava Gupta, the scholar-saint of renown in Kashmir and elsewhere (955-1015 A.D.), had received lessons in yogic practice from his mother. Kashmir has had learned, religious women in the past, and Lalleshwari too belongs to this traditional class of women. She had shown natural aptitude for religion from the beginning. The stage for her future accomplishment was set while she was yet a child. She was a born yogi.

[1]Ibid, v. 300.

CHAPTER III

Married Life

THE STORY of human civilization is the growth of worthy and useful behaviour among the members of a social group. In course of time such repeated behaviour becomes custom. Out of custom grow institutions. One of the most important and primary institutions in the human society is that of marriage. In India, the tradition is that a girl has got to be married, sooner or later.

So Lalla could not avoid marriage in spite of her deep-rooted religious inclination. She could not escape the social convention. Mentally, she was wedded to Shiva ; she had to be married physically to some young man, all the same. Parents look for a suitable bridegroom at good time and it must have been done in her case, too. In our society there are strange taboos. One's kith and kin raise their eyebrows if a daughter grows and remains unmarried beyond the age of puberty. Caring for what others would say must have been more acute several hundred years ago than it is today among the Kashmiris.

Child-marriage is condemned today as a curse. It is quite understandable, however, that after Zulju's invasion of the Valley, when the atrocities he committed were still fresh in the minds of the people and the wounds he inflicted still raw, early marriage of girls may have become a matter of expediency.

The legend has it that Lalla was married somewhat too early for her years. Some say that she was only eleven years of age at that

time and some make it as fifteen. A Kashmiri researcher, Pandit Anand Kaul, says that "when she was twelve years of age, she was married to a young man in a Brahman family, surnamed Nica Bhaṭṭ, at Drangabal Mahal at Pampar"[1]. Another version is that the name of Lalla's husband was Soma Bhaṭṭ, son of one Shiva Bhaṭṭ of PAMPAR.[2]

The names of the husband of Lalleshwari and her father-in-law are not certain. They are not recorded in any history or chronicle of Kashmir.

PĀMPAR is a township hardly two kilometres away from Sempur, the place where Lalla's parents lived. It is also situated on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. Charles Ellison Bates writes : "Pámpar is situated on the right bank of the Jhelum, about eight miles south-east of Srinagar ..It is built on two strips which lie parallel to each other and are divided by a marsh. DRANGABAL is the central portion from the bridge to *Shoka-baba-ki ziarat* . beneath a chinar tree. By the riverside, there is a '*lingam* and some ancient carved stones.'[3] In olden days it was 'the chief place of Vihi Pargana' and, owing to its central position in a fertile tract, seems to have always been a place of importance and is often mentioned by Kalhana and the later chroniclers.'[4]

Names get often changed with the passage of time. Pampar is a corruption of PADMĀPUR which was its orignal name. Padmāpur was founded by Padmā, one of the maternal uncles of the king Chippata-jayapida, also called Brihaspati, in the beginning of the 9th century A.D. At the directions of the king's mother, Jayadevi, Padmā built a shrine of Shiva, named JAYESHVARA. He also built a temple of Vishnu-Padmasvāmin.[5] Padmāpur is about four miles south-west of Khonamuh. "It is the ancient Khonamuṣa famous as the birthplace of BILHANA, the famous poet of Kashmir...The saffron fields which Bilhana mentions extend close to the lower of the two hamlets which form the village. In the

[1]*Lal Ded* . Jayalal Kaul . published by Sahitya Akademi. 1973 ; p 8.

[2]*Lalla 'Arifa Saheba* : A biographical pamphlet in Urdu : Mahatma Devi Bhagat Ji Maharaj (through Shri Ramjoo Pandit Malla, retired employee, Revenue Department, Kashmir) ; published in 1960.

[3]Gazetteer of Kashmir & Ladakh : reprinted 1974, pp 645-47.

[4]Kalhana ; Stein vol. II . Motilal Banarsidass, Publishers, Delhi ; 1961.

[5]*Ibid*, Vv 681, 695.

upper hamlet is a sacred spring called Dāmodar Nāg...On the hill-side above the village issues another Nāg (spring) which under the name of Bhuvaneshwari is visited on the pilgrimage to Harshis-hvara. The latter Tirth (sacred place of pilgrimage) lies on the summit of the high ridge which rises to the north of the village. It consists of a 'SVAYAMBHU LINGA' situated in a small cave and enjoys considerable popularity."[1]

Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) has been a monopoly product of Pāmpar from the hoary past. "The flowers appear about the middle of October and the purple blooms and the delicious though somewhat over-powering scent of the crimson and orange stigmata, turn the dry, uninviting plateau above Pāmpar into a rare and wonderful garden."[2] It is a treat to enjoy the sight of blooming saffron on a moonlit night. The table-land is called Sonakrend (or golden basket) Wuddar (karewa or plateau). It is entirely devoted to cultivation of saffron, for which the town has been famous over the ages. Today, saffron is cultivated on other plateaus of Kashmir also. From Kalhana's *Rajataringini* we learn that in Kashmir "it has been the privilege of royalty to use it as a scented salve or emollient. In early Greek times, saffron was royal colour. As a perfume it was strewn in Greek halls, courts and theatres and in the Roman baths. The streets of Rome were sprinkled with saffron when Nero made his entry into the city. Saffron was used as an ingredient in Greek medicine and cuisine."[3] Even now, it continues to be used as medicine and cooking spice in Kashmir, in addition to being used for the auspicious mark on the forehead between the eyebrows by the devout Hindus.

In this garden of saffron, ascetic Lalla was destined to find her new home and, like saffron, she became famous in every quarter of the Valley and acted as a soothing balm for people in distress. But, before attaining that exalted position, she had to suffer immenesly. Her married life is a saga of privations, misunderstanding, and hardships.

Her father-in-law was one of the prosperous owners of saffron land and her husband, a spoilt child of a well-to-do family. As a

[1]*Ibid.* Stein, Pp 458-59.

[3]Valley of Kashmir : Walter R. Lawrence.

[2]*Rajataringini* (The saga of Kings of Kashmir) : R S. Pandit, published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1977 ; page 13 (footnote).

successful merchant, Shiva Bhaṭṭ may have been too busy to attend to minor affairs of the household. From stories handed down to us, we conclude that her mother-in-law was extremely irritable and arrogant. She thought no end of herself and troubled the young bride in a thousand ways. Soma Bhaṭṭ was a mother's darling. Mother and son made fun of Lalla for trivial mistakes and they taunted her day in, day out. They, perhaps, failed to understand Lalla's self-discipline and moderate habits. But the young bride was absorbed in her own thoughts and did not mind their ill-treatment. That aggravated their anger, all the more. The elder lady had a spark of malice in her character.

It is said that Lalla attended to her domestic chores meticulously. Her day's work began long before daybreak. She swept the house clean,—the rooms, stairs and halls; she smeared the floors and the stairs with red clay and cowdung as was the custom then. Next she went to the river to fetch water. Going through the usual ablutions, she spent some time worshipping MAHĀDEVA at Jayeshvara and the Visnupadmasvāmin. She may also have engaged in chanting of some Mantras, her routine practice Having done that, she brought pails of water home. She assisted her mother-in-law in pounding and husking paddy with a pestle in a mortar and she may have also helped at cooking food. There were no rice mills then, for domestic purposes. What was her fault then, for which her mother-in-law and her husband were not pleased with her ? We can guess that it was her quaint, self-absorbed way of living and even her other-worldliness. They found her usually lost in her own thoughts. She was too much given to godliness and piety. She thought, after some time, that her mother-in-law was like a nettle and to water it with milk was useless. Her husband was like an ass and to feed an ass with molasses is futile. It is sheer waste of time to make people like these understand words of wisdom. She tried to make her husband recognize her mental state but it was a vain attempt. The mother was perverse and vengeful and her son lacked understanding and commonsense, completely. In this untoward situation she had to fall back on her patience and endurance.

There is a verse in the vakhs of Lalleshwari on which is based an episode. In course of time, Lalla's mother-in-law became a sadist. She began starving her uncomplaining daughter-in-law.

She placed a round stone in the bowl in which Lalla was served her meal. The stone was covered with a thin layer of cooked rice to make it look like a bowlful of food. For Lalla it became one of the aspects of her 'Sādhana'—the life of spiritual discipline. She ate whatever little rice there was in the bowl, washed the stone when she finished eating and placed it back in the kitchen at its specific place. Nobody can tell how long this game of stone-in-the-bowl continued. Legend has it that, other than the two women, none knew about it.

It so happened that it was a day of feasting and rejoicing. May be, it was SHIVARATRI, the most important festival of the Kashmiri Hindus, even today. Some say that it was the occasion of house-warming, as Shiva Bhaṭṭ had built a new house, the old one having been burnt down during the arson by Zulju's men. Whatever the cause of the festivity, Lalla went to the river as usual, and, as usual, she exchanged greetings and pleasantries with the other young women of the village who also came to fetch water from the river. As is the habit among the women of Kashmir to this day, they asked one another what they were to cook for the big day. Since it was a day of feasting at her father-in-law's, they teased Lalla by suggesting indirectly to her that she would have a sumptuous dinner that day; that she would have all the savoury dishes of various kinds, such as *'Roganjosh'*, *'Kabargāh'*, *'Yakhni'*, *'Kofta'*, etc., besides fish and vegetables of all variety. Poor Lalla was already at the end of her patience She visualized the stone in her bowl. She could contain herself no longer. With tears in her eyes, she blurted out: "whether they kill a fat ram or a little lamb, Lalla shall have only her usual stone in the eating bowl" She may have even explained herself in plain language to make them understand her troubles. She had divulged a terrible secret, at last, willy-nilly. Her friends at the riverside were shocked and the story went round in the neighbourhood. When Shiva Bhaṭṭ came to know of it, he was shocked, too. At long last, the stone parted company with the bowl. It was thrown away into the Jhelum never to be retrieved. The stone has become legendary and the notorious mother-in-law, a symbol of wickedness.

But the misery of Lalla's married life did not come to an end with this episode On the contrary, it aggravated the anger of her mother-in-law. She found other ways to bother her meek

and gentle daughter-in-law. She went even to the length of scandalizing her. She poisoned the ears of her son with a false, concocted story. The accusation was made that early in the morning Lalla disappeared from home to have a secret meeting with a stranger. Soma Bhaṭṭ was a credulous fool. The fact of Lalla's going to the temple very early in the morning was distorted. Mother and son made a joint attack at her. Innocent Lalla was amazed and overcome with grief.—"What sort of a person am I, and in what black colours am I painted ! Even the air is making holes in me, as does the hoopoe dig holes in the ground," says she. All that she could do was to pity them for their ignorance. Her protestations were of no avail The riches of Shiva Bhaṭṭ had made his wife totally irreligious and the world of the spirit was quite beyond her understanding. They were late risers. To understand Lalla's religious way of life was not merely difficult but, so to say, impossible for them. Lalla may have talked to some women of her age but they could not help in the matter. Daughters-in-law were not encouraged to rise in revolt against their mothers-in-law. Lalla found that it was futile to complain. As she was devoted to her Lord, she was convinced that, some day, MAHĀDEVA would correct her mother-in-law and husband. He would surely show them the path of righteousness. Things drifted on till the climax came about one day as follows.

A plot had been hatched by the mother and her son. The latter was angry about the presumed unfaithful conduct of his wife and he had made up his mind to see the end of it.

As usual, Lalla went to the river very early in the morning ; she washed herself and went to the temples of Jayeshvara and Viṣnu-Padmasvāmin. She prayed to Lord Shiva fervently to relieve her of her intolerable misery. Her married life was becoming too difficult to bear and her heart was full to the brim with sorrow. Again and again, she prostrated herself before the idol of Shiva. Long were her prayers, longer than usual.

Meanwhile, her husband lay in wait for her, with a club in hand.[1] He had made up his mind to smash her head. Lalla, ignorant of what was brewing behind her back, went to the *Ghāt*, filled her pail with water and returned towards her home, walking with slow

[1]*Noornama*; Baba Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi and *Asrar-al-Abrar*, Baba Davud Mishkvati

steps and a heart laden with grief. As she entered the compound of her house, a club from behind struck the pail with a fierce blow and smashed the earthen pot to pieces. The pot crashed and the pieces fell on the ground around. But, lo and behold ! the water in the pail, as if frozen, did not spill ! Repeating Shiva's name, (OM NAMAH SHIVAI !) she entered the house, and filled all the pots and pans with water. Shiva had come to her rescue at last. Her pail of water did not empty out : it was an extraordinary sight. She kept filling vessels with water and the water kept pouring out. Her mother-in-law shrank into a corner of the room with extreme fright. She was stunned with what she saw. Then Lalla went to the back window of the room and shook off her watery load, out of the house into a ditch at the back. The water formed a pool there and the pool exists to this day [1] People call it the LALLA-TRAG. With this supernatural event, it is said, came to an end the domestic troubles of her married life. Like that of Shri Ramakrishna, her married life was a mere form. There were no children by her marriage.

[1]*Noor-nama* · Baba Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi (died in 1047 H). Also *Asrar-al-Abrar* . Baba Davud Mishkvati.

CHAPTER IV

The Preceptor's Beneficence

IT IS NOT easy to give credence to the breath-taking phenomenon of water standing in position as if frozen in the pail on her shoulder when the earthen container had broken into pieces. It is marvellous, indeed! The event put her mother-in-law and her husband out of her way. No longer did they attempt to exercise their authority over her or treat her badly as they had done. Now, they held her in awe. They avoided crossing her path as much as they could. She attended to her household chores as before, but her devotion to Lord Shiva deepened. Her prayers and 'Puja' absorbed her more and more intensively, though her religious devotion was as yet an entirely private and secluded affair. She did her 'Puja' in the family worship-room (Ṭhākurdvār) and the temples of Shiva and Vishnu, as usual. She may have gained supernatural powers (*siddhi*), but that was not her goal. She wanted to recognize and realize Shiva. She wanted to see Him face to face: she wanted to live in Shiva-consciousness. She was an idealist and she had set her mind on Yoga. She wanted to experience the unity of Being.

However, that was a goal too far away from her yet. So, she had moments of frustration and despair. There are several of her vakhs which reveal her mental agony. She says: "I am towing my boat of life with the thread of unspun yarn: going thus I cannot reach the shore of salvation. My efforts are going to waste like water in an unbaked, earthern dish. I long to go back Home." She had not controlled her mind completely yet. The state of total

non-attachment had not been reached. So she was very sad. Sometimes, there was a conflict in her mind created by opposing and divergent views put forward in different religious philosophies. She was naturally attracted by the salient points of all these. There were pulls and pressures on her mind. Buddhism, Vedanta philosophy, the Shākta Way of worship, and the recent arrival of Islam may have placed her on the cross-roads. Nevertheless, she had a clear picture of her objective in her mind. She wanted to realize Monistic Shaivism and be rid of the cycle of birth and death. She scolds herself for being drawn this way and that.

Mere wishfulness to attain the sublime goal was not enough. She had to cross ditches, embankments and streams in order to reach the straight road to freedom from birth and death. Often, she felt crest-fallen and dejected. She admits that at this stage of her mental development she did not possess even a pennyworth of spiritual merit to cross the ocean of life. Her mind was like a wooden bow and the quiver carried weak arrows of pith-reeds of grass which could not smite the target She was haunted by the fear lest her valuable human life should go to waste, for she very much desired to attain Shiva in this very life. But time was running out. She understood that she could not set much store by the transitory breath and there is no guarantee of a long life. We must make the most of our pre-ordained days. So, she was disturbed and sad. She had moments of doubt which tormented her.

More than anything else, the fact that she could not control her mind bothered her. The mind is a queer thing : it wanders suddenly, specially when we make an effort to concentrate on any particular thing Now it gets into the gloom of dark clouds and back it comes to the sunny, green valleys. It weaves fanciful pictures and makes a mockery of our factual existence. Lalleshwari tells us in her Vakhs that it was a job for her to control the mind. In the fraction of a second, it skipped off and covered a hundred thousand 'yojanas'[1]. She knew that without concentration of mind, *dhyana*, she could not advance a step in her practice of yoga; she could not attain the desired results. In many vakhs she bemoans her inability to control her mind.

[1]*Yojana* : a measure of distance equal to 4 *kroshas* or 9 English miles.

Ultimately, she recognized the fact that there was no way out of this mental maze, this dangerous mesh, except to resign to the Will of God, the arbiter of fate. In a state of disappointment and helplessness, she surrendered to the Will of the Supreme Being. She had absolute and uncompromising faith in His benign helpfulness. Total surrender to God's Will bore fruit before long.

Her Guru, Siddha Śrikanṭha, popularly known as SEDAMOL—revered father of perfection and supernatural powers—, a very great saint renowned in the whole district, did not leave her in the lurch. He may have been observing her development on the spiritual path with keen interest. Now he found that she had become the proper *'pātra'* (literally vessel) or fit person to receive God's grace. He could withhold his help no longer. And, one fine morning, Lalla received the Guru's Word. He passed on to her the mystic formula of initiation. She was told to withdraw completely from the external world and to concentrate on her inner self She was told how to fix her mind on Omkar, the sacred syllable Om—the Vedic Mantra. The Guru's Word worked like magic. It changed her whole attitude to life. Her joy knew no bounds. From the external world of inanities, she passed into a rare atmosphere of mystical experience which 'passeth show' "Therefore, I started dancing nude," says she.[1]

Tradition has it that, henceforth, she did not care for the social taboos and absurd formalities. She tore off her clothes and for the rest of her life wandered up and down the Valley in a God-mad state. The later Persian chroniclers took the Vakh, quoted above, literally and adapted the folktale, accordingly They say that she roamed about the valley stark naked. She had lost all discrimination between man and woman. For her, there was no man around : of whom could she be ashamed ? In a self-absorbed state of mind, she sang her vakhs, as she wandered from place to place. She prophesied to people of events to come. In course of time, her abdominal muscles loosened and hung low and covered her female parts The story has been made that it is because of her hanging abdomen that she is called LALLA, the word for it.

[1]According to another, scholarly interpretation of this pertinent verse, she danced like *noung* (a herbal plant found on hillsides in Kashmir)—*vide Koshur Samachar*, Lal-Ded Number, 1971

But there are people who do not see eye to eye with this view. Those, who have an eye for discerning the truth in a debris of tradition, outright deny this tale. They say that it has been concocted either by misunderstanding the pertinent vakh referred to above or for malicious denigration of the saint. Take, for instance, the story of the hanging abdomen and its being the origin of her name, Lalla. It is easy to convince one that this is not true. She was called LALLA from her childhood. The proof is obvious from a careful study of the Lalla-Vakh. When she was still not introduced to spiritual knowledge and when she suffered untold misery at the house of her father-in-law, as a new bride and a young daughter-in-law, particularly when she suffered starvation with the stone in her eating bowl, she had said that whether they killed a fat ram or a little lamb at her house, 'LALLA' would have her stone, in any case. She called herself 'Lalli' long before receiving the word of initiation ; she called herself by this name because it was given to her by her parents. Perhaps, the builder of the fictitious story ignored this important fact, unwittingly though. This name was given to Hindu girls in Kashmir, long before Lalla was born. It is an abreviation of Lalita which occurs in *Rajataringini* of Kalhana even in the 10th century A.D. The imagined and invented story of her wanderings with a naked, hanging abdomen cannot stand close scrutiny.

Secondly, she uses her name, Lalla, in a number of her *vakhs*. It is a derivative of Sanskrit 'lālasa' which means 'An eager longing for something, ardently desirous of', etc. She was an aspirant for true knowledge. She was totally absorbed in His thought and the name suited her from her very childhood.

Thirdly, the exalted poetry, communicating coherent, purposeful spiritual knowledge of the highest merit, a rich poetical specimen, perfect in content and form, cannot be the mad utterances of a naked wanderer. Such a woman would surely be taken for a mad woman, more so in the 14th century when the Muslim immigrants insisted on *Purdah* for woman and, even among the Hindus women-folk observed restraint in social freedom. It is difficult to believe that, with our cultural background, people would sit at the feet of a naked woman, listen to her sublime poetry, remember it by rote and then make the vakhs a family possession, to be passed on from generation to generation. The

Persian chroniclers, who record her as a wandering saint, also say that she had become a disciple devoted to Sayyed Hussain Samnani. Even so, how could it be when the Muslim Sayyeds are known to have been particular about proper clothing, covering modesty in particular. How could a saintly Sayyed countenance a naked woman sitting at his feet and carry on spiritual discussion with her ?

In her own vakhs, Lalleshwari teaches that we should live a moderate life ; that we should eat to remove hunger and that we should wear clothes to keep off cold. In Kashmir, the cold of winter does demand the use of adequate clothing to keep the body warm. And she taught what she practised, as she says in one of her vakhs.

Many arguments are advanced in support of her sanity of thought and action. Hence, the story that she wandered completely naked may well be deemed as a concoction. Explanation is given for the phrase 'dancing nude'. They say that by 'dancing nude', she communicates her exuberance of joy. The Guru's beneficence removed all her mental afflictions and, after her long sufferings, she at last found the key to salvation. Immediately, she was so overwhelmed with joy that she could not express it but by using the phrase 'dancing nude'. Henceforth, she did not care whoever knew about her secret meditation and 'puja' in the temples. The phrase has been used as a figure of speech.

After the initiation, Lalla took to intensive practice of Yoga, unmindful of the people at home. Nobody interfered in her meditation, neither her husband nor her mother-in-law. We do not hear of them any more. It is said that she did not leave her hearth and home until the death of her husband.

Sedamol had drawn her out of her mental depression. Hope gleamed in her eyes—the hope of seeing her Lord some day. She says that henceforth joy and sorrow had become the same for her. The external world had lost its importance for her, altogether, as her Guru had instructed her to withdraw into herself.

Baba Ali Raina records in the chronicle, entitled *Tazkiratal-' Ārifeen*, that when Sayyed Jalal-ud-Din and Hazrat-i-Sayyed Ali Hamadani entered the Valley of Kashmir, 'Lalla Arifa, the second Rabia of Basra', went seven stations ahead to receive them with

her body fully clothed, as a woman is expected to be. This negates the story of her wandering nude.[1]

[1] Khwaja Mohammad Azam Dedamari, in his history of Kashmir (*Wāqiat*) records "Research has not been able to establish the meeting between Lalla-ded and Amir-i-Kabir, Sayyed Ali Hamadani".

CHAPTER V

Spiritual Perfection

THERE IS no ambiguity or haze about her spiritual experiences. Of course, they are very difficult to explain in our language, with its limited connotation. For a long time, she had been acting upon the principles supposed to be necessary for the beginner of a spiritual way of life. These basic rules had got established in her conduct of life. She ate only as much food as was necessary to keep body and soul together and observed self-restraint in thought and deed She had overcome desire for worldly goods. She was free from passions of avarice, jealousy, lust and anger, and had become wholly unattached. Above all, she had acquired equanimity and balance of mind. Her mind no longer wandered ; she had no distractions. Resignation to the Will of God and faith in His grace were complete. No longer was she disturbed by the changing moods of environment, internal and external. All the time, she was taken up with the thought of Shiva. He was the only object of her faith and desire.

On receiving 'The 'Word' from her Guru, she was disturbed at first. The load of spiritual practice was too heavy for her. Gradually, she pulled herself together and set her body and mind to the spiritual exercise. In several vakhs she admits that Shiva is difficult to attain. It is not a child's play to bring the Nāḍīs under control, for example

But Lalleshwari had an intense desire to achieve her goal and she was determined to do it. She was not daunted by her difficulties. She lays down that for spiritual enlightenment, one has got to get dissolved in the thought of God like salt in water.

Her yogic practices are expressed in vivid images and metaphors. She compares PRĀNA, (the Life Force, not merely breath), with a thief. She says that she closed the appertures of her body, (the sense organs), which open on the external world ; imprisoned the thief in her heart and then lashed him with the whip of OM !

Ample light is thrown in her vakhs on the manner of the practice she carried on[1]. She did not seek the Lord outside herself, in the Ṭhākuradvār or the temples, now. She brings home to us that the Lord is there very much within us. She practised Yoga with total devotion and with a strong will. In practice, she achieved the control of breath, which is a very important part of Eastern meditation. She lays stress on the concentration of mind on the in-going and out-going breath (PRĀNA-APĀNA), while the organs of sense-perception are completely subdued. How long she went on with her yogic practice, nobody can tell Having purified her body and mind, she stayed waiting outside the gates of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* within her till she did have a dazzling glimpse of Him. "The inner Light was winnowed out", says she. She basked in the Light of Divinity. She was enveloped by Cosmic Consciousness. It was gloriously bright. She had visions and experiences on the supra-mental plane, during yogic trance (Samādhis), and she was in raptures.

The *vakhs*, in which she reveals her experiences, are difficult to explain because they are full of occult knowledge. They are visions of supernatural truth. For example, she says in one of her *vakhs* : "I compressed the breath circulating through the ten NĀDĪS ; caught hold of the steed of the mind by the reins , the SHESHI-KALA melted and the void mingled with the void !" In another vakh, she says : "I, Lalla, willingly entered the Garden-gate ; there, O Joy ! I found Shiva united with Shakti ; there and then, I got absorbed drinking at the lake of Nectar ; immune to harm am I, dead as I am to the world, though still alive "

She communicates her experiences in pictures and her visions are varied. No doubt is left in our mind that she had attained her spiritual goal. Her evolution was complete and perfect. Her consciousness was not only purified but also raised in level. For her, DUALITY had disappeared. All that existed on the earth and in heaven was the expression of the Divine Being. Her mind stayed in this consciousness, and the *vakhs* communicate her supreme knowledge.

[1] For detailed explanation and study of the Lalla-Vakh, reference may be made to *THE ASCENT OF SELF* by the author, published by M/s Motilal Banarsidass, Publishers & Booksellers, Delhi-7, in 1978.

Lalleshwari's experiences point to a great truth, *viz.*, the essence of Godhead is very much within the individual himself. Shiva is all-pervading. We live in Him and through Him. When we rise above the pettinesses of the world and practise yoga, we can obtain knowledge which defies description. The same Shiva dwells in us all. Lalleshwari had attained the consciousness of PARMA SHIVA and the worldly afflictions could worry her no more. She had reached the state of perfection which is the state of Truth-Consciousness—Bliss.

The English renderings of a few of her *vakhs*, indicating her spiritual attainment, are given below :

1. *Crossing the six Forests, the Sheshikala flowed ;*
   Prakrti was burnt out with Prāna !
   With the Fire of Love I roasted my Heart ;
   This was the Way I realized Shiva.

2. *By constant practice, the manifested Universe rose to dissolution,*
   It mingled with the Transcendental :
   The void melted away and the PURE remained.
   This is the lesson to you, O Pandit.

3. *In the highest state, Speech, Mind, the Immanent and the Transcendental disappear,*
   Yogic postures and the Mantra of Silence have no entry there ,
   Even Shiva and Shakti do not appear there ;
   Whatever remains is the lesson to you.

4. *When the Tantra melts away, Mantra remains,*
   Mantra too disappears, leaving behind Consciousness (Chitta),
   When Chitta dissolves, NOTHING remains ;
   The void is reabsorbed into the Void.

5. *The Sun disappeared and the Moon shone forth,*
   The Moon disappeared, only Chitta remained,
   Chitta too disappeared, NOTHING remained !
   Bhūr, Bhuvāh, Svāh departed, too.

CHAPTER VI

Her Miracles

THE WORLD in which we live today is dominated by materialistic and secular culture. Most people do not believe in miracles, as such. They are likely to cite a vakh of Lalleshwari in which she denounces miracle-mongers. In that Vakh it is declared that stopping a current of water, extinguishing raging fire with a puff of breath, walking in mid-air, milking a wooden cow, all these are nothing but sleight of hand and legerdemain. We do not know the occasion on which she said it for the good of her listeners. But in the spiritual domain, it is known that occult powers are enjoyed by the adepts. Unusual insight, clairvoyance, forecasting, thought-reading, blessing people with appropriate good results, or cursing in anger, levitation, etc. are not unknown powers of spiritualists. Hagiology is full of situations in which saints exercised their miraculous powers.

Our Hindu mythology relates stories to illustrate the miraculous powers of our sages and saints. In the Bhavishya Purana, we are told that Anasuya cursed the eternal ones—Brahma, Hari and Shambhu—, when they approached her drunk with passion....'You will be my sons, for you have been infatuated by desire.' Then Brahma became Chandramasah, Hari became Dattatreya, and the lord Hara became incarnate as Durvasah. And they all became yogis to dispel that evil. In Mahabharata, we are told that Vrtra, the leader of demons, stupefied Indra by his powers of illusion. In the Ramayana we have an amusing moment when we see Hanuman becoming large or small at will to suit the occasion. In fact,

miracles have been incorporated with our ancient cultural background.

Jesus Christ had been invited to a wedding at Cana, in Galilee. When all the wine had been drunk, the host found that they were out of wine. To save the awkward situation, Jesus asked the servants to fill the stone-jars with water and the servants filled them to the brim. Then Jesus looked into the jars and asked them to taste the water which had turned into wine [1] This was the first of his mighty works, and his disciples believed in him. His miracles of 'Healing a paralyzed man'[2], 'Making a leper clean'[3], 'Feeding five thousand persons on five loaves of barley bread and two fish,[4]' etc., are some of the other great feats which Jesus performed. The miracles of Moses are no less astonishing : his wand turned into a snake !

On the material plane too, we see miracles happening almost everyday. The achievements of science and technology are miraculously staggering. Only a few decades ago, it would have been considered a sheer miracle for man to set foot on the moon. The inventions of electronics are surprising. Controlling satellites from the ground without any visible media and receiving back messages, tele-pictures, radio and T.V. signals, without any connecting wires, may well be categorized as modern miracles. To a layman, these wonderful things do not seem to obey any known laws of Nature.

Like Rishis of yore, saints work wonders even today. And Lalleshwari was a great Yogi of miraculous powers. Generally, great saints do not utilize their powers, for they rise above the charms of petty gains of the world. Her miracles set down here have been taken from later Persian chronicles, history and traditional tales of Kashmir.

1. The Formation of Lalla-Trāg

The miracle relating to this event has already been mentioned in the chapter on her married life. It has been recorded by Baba

[1]The Gospel : John, 2 1-12
[2]Mark 2. 1-12
[3]Mark 1. 40-45
[4]John 6. 1-15

Nasib-ud-Din Ghazi, Baba Davud Mishkvati and later historians of Kashmir.

2. Forecasting Prince Shahab-ud-Din's Future

In the year 748 Hijri, Sultan 'Ala-ud-Din ascended the throne of Kashmir. He had two sons, Shahab-ud-Din and Qutab-ud-Din. While a prince, Shahab-ud-Din went out for hunting to one of the forests named VAGPUSHTA[1] in the mountains. He was accompanied by three friends, Udai Shri (also called Odasha Rāwal), Chandra Ḍāmara (also called in some chronicles as Malik Jandār) and a groom named Ākhta Ji, besides their retinue.

As chance would have it, a self-absorbed, divinely graceful lady, apparently a yogi, appeared from a mountain cave. She seemed to be the head of a group of spiritualists. Shahab-ud-Din and his friends had left the rest of the party far behind when they saw the yogi. They thought that they might benefit by meeting her. So they alighted from their horses and addressed her, paying due respects. The yogini brought a bowl of sacred drink from her cave and offered it to the prince to drink. Readily did Shahab-ud-Din hold the bowl from her hand, drank avidly half of its contents and then passed on the bowl to his companions. Chandra Ḍāmar drank half of what was left in it and Odasha Rāwal the other half. Nothing was left for Ākhta Ji.

The Yogini then prophesied that Shahab-ud-Din would ascend the throne and become a famous Sultan, rich in conquests and wealth and great deeds. Chandra Dāmar and Udai Shri were told that they would command respect and wealth. But for unlucky Ākhta Ji, she predicted that he would die before reaching home. This is exactly what happened. It is said that the Yogini who made the prophecy was Lalla-ded.[2].

3. Admonishing Sheikh Noor-ud-Din

Baba Ali Raina records in *Tazkirat-al-Ārifeen* (970 H) as follows: Bibi Lalla-Maji was one of the disciples of Hazrat Sayyed Hussain Samnani. She was, spiritually, highly advanced and

[1] *Rajataringini* by Jonaraja · Translated. Professor S.K. Kaul.

[2] Baba Davud Mishkvati and other Persian chroniclers and later historians of Kashmir.

remained divinely absorbed: Hazrat Sayyed Hussain Samnani considered her to be the right person to look after NUṄDA RIṠHI who was going to be born at KAIMUH, in the Pargana Anantnag. He told her that the new saint would receive much instruction from him and from her. She should look after him as her son. So he directed her to go to Kaimūh.

It is said that when Nuṅda Rishi was born, he did not suckle at the breast of his mother for several days. The parents, Sheikh Salar (Salat Sanz) and Sadra-Maji[1] as well as the other members of the family and the neighbours, were upset. They tried all the known ways to induce the new-born baby to suckle but all in vain. When they were in despair and the baby was in a precarious condition, there appeared Lalleshwari at the door. She went directly to the place where the mother lay with the child. She picked baby Nuṅda up ; found that it was really (Nuṅda) a cherub of a child ; put her own breast to the baby's little mouth and admonished it thus :

"You were not ashamed of coming into the world : how come that you are ashamed of being suckled ?"

All the people present were astonished to see that the baby at once started sucking. Lalla then handed over the child to its mother who gave her breast to it.

NUṄDA RISHI became a great saint and poet of Kashmir in his own turn. In one of his long prayers to God he says :

> *Lalla of Padmāpur drank amrita (divine drink) by long draughts,*
> *She was our beloved Avtār !*
> *May God grant a boon to me like that !*

(*b*) In the last years of the reign of Sultan Shahab-ud-Din, Nunda Rishi was once busy breaking into a house, as ordered to do by his step-brothers who were thieves by profession. Lalla-ded passed by that way and called Nuṅda. She rebuked him for house-breaking and told him that he would not get anything from a poor man's house. She advised him to go to the big house of God and break into it : perhaps in that way he might obtain something

[1]Maji in Kashmiri means mother.

worthy and great. Hearing this Nuṅda gave up stealing and forthwith entered a cave at Kaimūh, his village, for penance and prayers.[2]

4. The Miracle of two (Tagaries) Basins of Earthen Pottery.

There was a Brahman known for his piety, austerity and asceticism. His name was Siddha Shakt. He lived at Padmāpur. He wanted to make Lalla-ded one of his disciples and followers. One day he boasted to her of his spiritual attainment and austerity. He said that he ate just one grain of rice on the day of the new-moon, and increased the quantity by one grain a day till the day of the fullmoon and in the next fortnight, he again reduced his food by one grain a day. On Amāvasya, the night of total darkness, he ate nothing. He was proud of his self-mortification and abstemiousness.

In order to teach him to be humble, Lalla-ded performed a miracle. She asked him to bring two 'tagāries' (dishes of earthen pottery used for washing clothes). She placed one 'tagāri' underneath her feet and stood up in it The other was placed over her head. This was done on the day of full-moon. She asked Siddha Shakt to lock the door of the cell from outside and not to disturb her for a fortnight. She instructed him to come on Amāvasya to have a chat with her. Siddha Shakt, accordingly, locked the door from outside and, putting the key in his pocket, went away. On the appointed Amāvasya morning he came, unlocked the door and saw that the two basins had closed one upon the other. Lalleshwari was not at all to be seen anywhere in the room. Out of astonishment and fear, he hastily shut the door of the cell, locked it from outside and did not breathe a word about what he had seen. The next full-moon evening he came again to the cell out of curiosity to find out what had happened during the fortnight. With shaky hands, he unlocked the door and peeped in. His surprise knew no bounds and he could not believe his eyes when he saw Lalleshwari standing between the two 'tagāries' as he had left her a month ago. This was a miracle of miracles ! He prostrated himself on the ground, touched her feet with his forehead and chanted prayers in

[2]Baba Davud Mishkvati, quoting *Tarikh-i-Hussaini* as his authority.

praise of God. He did not boast of his self-mortification any more[1].

5. Passing Away of Lalla-ded

(*a*) Another version of the miracle of 'tagāries' is like this. One day Lalleshwari placed one dish under her feet and another above her head. People around asked her what she was doing. She replied that she was hiding herself from the eyes of those who were ignorant of Truth Saying this, she became invisible : the two dishes came togther, sitting one upon the other, tight. They thought that she had hidden herself within the dishes. When they lifted the upper one, there was nothing ! It is said that this is how she passed away from the world.[2]

Tradition has a different version of her end, however.

(*b*) Full of years at ninety-three, one day she thought of meeting Nunda Rishi who had come to Chrār village from Dreyigām. At Kākapora she asked a boatman to ferry her across the Jhelum. He carried her across the river and helped her go up the bank. When she walked away, she blessed the boatman who soon found that his wooden oar had turned into a silver one.

She had a talk with the Rishi at Chrār on spiritual matters after which she went to VEJIBROR (Bijbehāra), old Vijayeshvara. Here she sat down and rested against the wall of the main mosque (Jām'a Masjid). Many people gathered there. Suddenly, they saw a lightning-flash rise into the sky and she was no more.

No mortal remains were left for the Hindus to cremate or for the Muslim to bury !

6. Meeting with Shah-i-Hamadān

But the most current story of a bewildering miracle is like this.

When Sayyed Ali Hamadāni, popularly called Shāh-i-Hamadān in Kashmir, came here, he brought hundreds of Sayyeds along with him as his followers to propagate Islam. One day as he was walking up a street along with some of his followers, he saw at some distance a naked woman, bright like a lightning, coming from the opposite side. The moment she saw him and the party, she

[1]Birbal Kachroo : History of Kashmir (1835), p. 100.
[2]Baba Davud Mishkvati : *Asrar-al-Abrar*.

ran back crying : "At last I have seen a man" ! She approached a grocer seeking refuge in his shop. She requested him to hide her inside his shop. But the grocer refused to let her in. Then she ran up the street further to a baker's. Without asking his permission, she jumped into his burning oven. Out of fear, lest he should be nabbed for a crime, the baker closed the lid of the oven at once.

When Shah-i-Hamadān and party reached the spot, Lalla-ded emerged from the lower opening of the oven, attired in celestial garments !

From this story is derived a Kashmiri proverb :

She came to a petty shopkeeper but blessed a baker.

The petty grocers in Kashmir have been poor and the bakers generally affluent.

CHAPTER VII

The Philosophy and Teachings

LALLESHWARI was a seeker of Truth. She was not a philosopher in the ordinary sense of the word and did not establish a new school of thought or lay down a new system of spiritual action. When we study her Vakhs carefully, we are driven to conclude that she guided and regulated her life by a philosophical system which had been in vogue in Kashmir for many centuries before her. Much before her time, there had been several streams of religious thought which had got mixed up in the Kashmiri mind. The vakhs give us the impression that Lalla-ded was eclectic in her approach to religion. She had studied the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, as is evident from the vakhs. There are indications that she was, perhaps unconsciously, influenced by Buddhism, as every Kashmiri must have been. Buddhism had a long sway here. Then there was the Shākt-mat (शाक्तमत), the worship of the divine Shakti as separate from Shiva, as also the Bhakti-Marg, such as was preached and practised later by Indian saints like Kabir, Chaitanya, Guru Nanak and Mira. She calls the Supreme Being as SHUNYA, and the lower self too 'Shuni' (Shūnes Shūnyāh mīlith gav). This is the burden of several of her vakhs. Chanting the name of Shiva all the time and meditating on 'SUHAM', she carries on her practice. She says : "Beholding you within me, in ecstasy I meditated on you !"

But when all is said and done, the fact remains that the YOGINI owned the TRIKA PHILOSOPHY of Advaita (monistic) Shaivism of Kashmir. This was the main system which she adopted and

followed in her spiritual ascent. It is not easy to make out what method she adopted in her practice of Yoga. These are esoteric matters and the methods are naturally occult and concealed from the uninitiated. There are indications in the vakhs, however, that she took to Kuṇḍalini Yoga There are scholars of Lalla-ded who aver that she practised Nāda-Bindu Yoga which, according to Grierson, is another name of the Kuṇḍalini yoga.[1] In her inspired state, she does speak from a very highly evolved and elevated level of consciousness. From the individual Jeeva-state she had risen to the state of the Universal Consciousness of PARMA SHIVA. This is the essence of the Trika Philosophy.

The goal of the Yogi is said to be to rise in the level of consciousness, from the objective individuated state to the subjective state of the Supreme Being. The Yogis come down to the objective state and rise back to the subjective state. In the latter state, the Yogi ascends to the level where duality of existence disappears. Everything is seen as the manifestation of one Supreme Being. According to this philosophy, the world of manifoldness is a reality, for it is the expression of Shiva Himself who dwells in everything. He is all-pervading. When Lalla-ded attained that state, she saw nothing but SHIVA all around. She was a realized soul and, as such, had become an adept in coming down to the ordinary level of individual self and, through 'recognition', rising back to the level of consciousness of the Supreme Observer. When a Yogi attains such a high level of consciousness and stays in it, we say that the Yogi is a *Jeevan-mukta*. He is liberated while alive in the world of name and form.

The Lalla-Vakhs establish that Lalleshwari had attained this state. When she says that she winnowed the inner light out or that she entered the Garden-Gate with all her consciousness of the

[1]*cf.* Śiva-Sutra Vimarśini by Kṣhemaraja. "Kundalini or Śakti resides within the Mlūādhāra, ordinarily sleeping rolled up in coils like a serpent. This serpent-like Kundalini surrounds the microcosmic Supreme, who is in the shape of a minute dot of light. The first stage towards enlightenment occurs when a man obtains glimpses of the 'dot' (Bindu) of light. By this the dot is set in motion and rouses the Kundalini or Śakti, from her sleep She wakes with a great sound (Nāda) and becomes conscious. The soul is thus illuminated by a flash of the Supreme light of Consciousness . . . ."

Grierson : preface.

world and saw SHIVA and SHAKTI united in ONE, we can infer that she had an ineffable experience of non-duality. She had ascended to a state beyond the Transcendental and the Immanent Shiva; she had experienced the REALITY which she calls SHUNYAH. She lived in a constant 'SAMĀDHI' and her visions bear it out.

A few facts demand our attention. During her Yogic practice, she meditated on Ōmkar, the symbol of Godhead. She says that one who fixes one's mind on the ŌMKAR at Nābhi Padma has no need for a thousand mantras. She speaks in metaphors and images; she says that she burnt herself down to merge in the ŌMKAR. She also says that with the help of PRANAVA, Lalla dissolved herself in the all-experiencing Light and thus had done away with the fear of death.

Having brought her mind under control and having subdued her sense-organs, she fixed her mind on PRĀNA, the vital energy. She speaks of repeating the 'Unspoken Gayatri Jap'; she also communicates the fact of concentrating on PRĀNA-APĀNA, the in-coming and out-going breath.

In the elevated state, she experienced a fantastic vision revealing an eternal truth. She found that the sky and earth, the night and the day, all phenomena of Nature and her multitudinous forms are nothing but 'NĀRĀN' (NĀRĀYANA), the Supreme Being [1]

Lalleshwari lays stress on some basic essentials for the guidance of an aspirant on the yogic path. The first is an unswerving FAITH in God. The second is the kindliness of an accomplished preceptor (GURU) and last, but, not least, is the grace of God (ANUGRAHA). She says that when the Divine call is heard, our soul is awakened and the LAMP blazes up in spite of untoward winds.

She lays down some principles to be followed by those desirous of attaining higher consciousness. We must have a burning desire to do so. We must also have a fund of patience and forbearance to put up with surrounding antagonisms. Patience leads to contentment. We must withdraw from the external world in the

[1]For detailed and thorough study of the Trika Philosophy of Kashmir, a good book on the subject, besides the Shiva Tantras of Kashmir, may be consulted.

sense of being unattached to the fruits of our actions and must become unmindful of the unfavourable circumstances in which we may have been destined to live. The external forces of reaction are either to be ignored or put up with, in order to be able to meditate on the inner world of experience. One has to be blind, deaf and dumb in relation to external issues, to avoid controversy. We must take things in our stride. Natural instincts should be sublimated with proper thought and consideration.

The subtle Nāḍīs, (known to the yogis alone), are to be utilized for spiritual practice. This helps the removal of afflictions (Kleśas) *viz.*, ignorance (*avidya*), egotism (*asmita*), desire (*rāga*), aversion (*dveśa*), and tenacity of mundane existence (*abhiniveśa*). Lalleshwari informs the aspirant repeatedly that Shiva is difficult to attain. She urges him to beware of the wandering, uncontrollable mind which skips off and travels thousands of miles in the twinkling of an eye. The mind must be steadied. Unless that is done, it is not easy to meditate. The control of the *chitta vrittis*, is necessary before one can practice the regulation of breath.

She teaches again and again that SHIVA is within us. Having cultivated a state of non-attachment, we must concentrate on the Shiva within. It is no use looking for spiritual upliftment outside ourselves and to take to forest hermitages ; we need not run away from home and escape from domestic duties. "The turf looks greener from a distance", says she. It makes no difference whether we stay at home or go to live in a forest, so long as the mind is not brought under control. Purification of mind and elevation of consciousness are the twin purposes of spirituality. Even for house-holders, non-attachment, the central lesson of the Bhagavad Gita, is necessary for becoming spiritually elevated. The foolish tie knots upon knots to the meshes of the world, says she.

She is not opposed to formal worship, but she insists on the recognition of the universal immanence of God. Formal worship ceases to be meaningful, once we rise to Shiva Consciousness. For this attainment, the thought process and the regulated breath must function harmoniously. If we act upon the Guru's WORD and meditate on Shiva from the core of our heart, we become truly actionless : we are not reborn.

But the most important lesson she teaches is that we should give up egotism and self-opinionatedness. On the lower plane of con-

sciousness, we often speak of our little selves as the doers of everything. When we boast of ourselves, we are far removed from Cosmic Consciousness and wallow in the mire of ignorance. But we become purified by renouncing I-ness, the Ego. Being rid of ego-consciousness, we attain mental equipoise and see ourselves and others as the same ; we face the day of joy and the night of sorrow without elation or dejection. The person, whose mind is raised to the level of non-dual perception, basks in the sunshine of knowledge, and sees the God of gods, indeed ! God is always pleased with him.

Lalleshwari does not address herself to the aspirants of spirituality alone ; her message is for mankind as a whole. This life is too precious to be wasted in ignorance. For aeons we have been coming into and going out of this world, owing to the inexorable law of transmigration of soul. Wisdom lies in ascending back to the original state—the state of true knowledge and deliverance. Night and day, we must wend our way back home. Yoga is not a matter of a day or so ; it is a life process to be carried on without break. We should not entertain any doubts on the path of salvation.

In regard to the regulation of our life, she teaches that we should adopt the middle path. This is what the Bhagavad Gita teaches and this is the lesson taught by the Buddha. She says that we must eat only as much as is necessary to keep body and soul together. Indulgence in food and gluttony are harmful for spiritual development. Fasting and self-mortification, on the other hand, make us conceited and proud. By walking on the middle path, we shall find the gates of self-realization opened to us. We must wear clothes to keep off cold and eat to remove hunger. The deadly enemies of man are lust, anger and greed. These must be destroyed; otherwise, they lead man astray. Having conquered them, we should consider ourselves the servants of all. Thus can we meditate on IŚVARA and consider everything else as dust and ashes. One has got to be careful about pseudo-spiritualists and those who cannot contain themselves on achieving occult powers. They waste away their energy and do not attain perfection.

Spirituality is not a theoretical affair : it is a matter of hard practice. Mere reading of scriptures and treatises on yoga does not lead us anywhere. Quoting texts like parrots will not do. **PRACTICE** is the thing. Through constant practice (*abhyāsa*),

scriptures too become unnecessary, in course of time. Lalleshwari attained bliss through practice and she preaches what she practised.

She is sorely opposed to killing of animals for food or for sacrifices offered to propitiate gods. From her exalted state of consciousness, she saw all life pulsating with Shiva. For Her the light of spiritual understanding shone on everything and everything became an embodiment of Shiva.

CHAPTER VIII

Lalla-Ded as an Ideal of Womanhood

IN KASHMIR, the name Lalla-ded stands for ideal womanhood. When we want to say that a woman is intelligent, modest, faithful, dutiful and gifted with patience and tolerance, we say that she is a LALLA-DED. This name also communicates self-denial and self-mortification. It denotes amiable temperament and obedience to the wishes and behests of elders. Lalla-ded has been remembered, over the centuries, with utmost reverence and affection for her saintliness, cosmopolitan outlook and kindliness for mankind. She was not only a saint par excellence but also a human being with a charming personality. She was divinely human.

Indian culture and consciousness have been influenced and moulded by a pattern of life set by our Avtars, Rishis, saints and noble men and women, mythological and historical. We call Shri Rama—the Purushuttama, the best among men, and would love to shape ourselves after him, body and mind. He undertook to live in forests for fourteen years simply to help his father redeem his pledge. He was gentle and brave at the same time, besides being human to the core. Over thousands of years Shri Rama has remained an embodiment of ideal manhood. He was an Avatar who fought against evil.

Sita, his consort, is worshipped with equal devotion for sharing the trials of her husband. It is not just a passing whim but an article of faith that whenever we have to quote chastity incarnate, we say that she is an Anasuya, the wife of sage Atri. Savitri will not fade out of our memory as an example of 'Pativrata' woman,

holding on to her dharma to the last. She snatched the soul of her deceased husband, Satyavan, from the dreaded Yama himself.

Lalla-ded too has come to occupy a pedestal of eminence by the side of historical heroines of India. She was a 'Brahmavadini', an enlightened woman-philosopher of the Vedic style, the like of whom we come across only in the Upanishads. Her name connotes all that is good and praiseworthy in women Her patience in trying circumstances was ideal. Think of the stone in her eating bowl, for days and months and her steadfast dedication to her goal ! It was a veritable 'Tapas' on her part And it was rewarding too She attained Shiva and became immortal. She left an indelible footprint for the world of women and chalked out a path leading to liberation from bondage.

During the chaotic turmoil in India at the time of the partition of the country, in 1947, Mahatma Gandhi said that he saw a ray of hope in Kashmir ; the hope of human values and human behaviour. History has vindicated his statement The reason is not far to seek. The Kashmiris have had the benefit of lessons in humanism taught by great saint-philosophers like Lalla-ded, Nunda Rishi and many others who had realized the Truth. To this day Kashmir is called a RÊSHVÀR—the garden of Rishis.

In her Vakhs, Lalla-ded teaches the lesson that all creatures are made of the same divine stuff. The variety and difference are only superficial and a matter of outward form Religious bigotry, prejudice and fanaticism are like carbuncles and tumours extraneous to human culture. Maulana Hali, a great Urdu poet, says that it is better to become a human being than to become a god ; but it involves greater effort to become human The life of Lalleshwari is a perennial source of inspiration for us to guide us in this effort. She helps us rise above the brutal tendencies. She purified her mind and disciplined herself with a will and she earnestly advises us to become disciplined in thought and deed. Both the spiritual and secular life of Lalleshwari guides us by her precept and example. She had risen above the pettinesses of mundane life.

We all know that life is not a bed of roses and our journey through it is not always smooth sailing We have to take the rough with the smooth. In adverse circumstances, our moral strength is measured by our capacity to face the challenges of life. We must be able to put up with them. Lalla-ded displayed her intelligence

and stamina when her stubborn mother-in-law and foolish husband refused to understand her. Ultimately, they could not cow her down and make her give up her spiritual practice. As an astute judge of men and matters, she understood their shortcomings and faced these resolutely. Hers was the most non-violent resistance that could be preached and practised in the world. She was confident of the fact that truth prevails at last. Her mother-in-law was exposed in due time and to this day remains a butt of ridicule and contempt.

Lalleshwari was gifted with a very sensitive, human heart. She looked on the social scene around her with keen interest and concern. She was pained to see that economic injustice prevailed in the society in which she lived. Not a little surprised was she to see a wise man starving for want of food while a fool ate like a glutton The fool had been spoiled and degraded by his undeserved riches so much so that he was found beating his cook! His tastes had been spoilt by surfeit of delicacies and self-indulgence. All the time, a wise man was withering like autumn leaves.

The concept of economic equality and fair distribution of wealth is comparatively modern. Lalla-ded could not explain the inequality except as a divine dispensation. But she was touched so acutely, all the same, by this inhuman spectacle. In a way, she forestalls the political economist of today. She would, if she were alive, fight tooth and nail for the evolution of a welfare state. She could not stomach the social order and the system in which a 'fool prospered at the cost of a wise man. The women of today would gladly emulate her sentiments and courageous protestations.

Pictures are painted on a wider canvas. She does not spare the proud Brahman of her time, though she was a Brahman herself, by her birth. She scolds him for withholding knowledge from the members of the other castes, for she fails to understand how a Brahman could be desecrated by imparting knowledeg of the scriptures to them. She had realized that when true knowledge dawns upon man, he finds no difference between himself and another. She calls the ignorant Brahmans, thieves who steal texts from scriptures and retail them to people for pecuniary advantage and cheat the gullible and become conceited. She says that the moment one realizes that there is no duality in life and that we are all God's children, one sees God himself. She could not understand the behaviour of the ignorant Brahmans. Concealing

scriptural knowledge from others was nothing short of selfish meanness.[1]

She was pained when she saw Brahmans killing sheep for propitiation of gods. To her this practice was abhorrent and contrary to knowledge of the truth. She calls a Brahman leading a sheep to the altar of sacrifice, a fool and tells him plainly that it is sheer ignorance to offer a living being to an apparently lifeless god of stone for food. The sheep has its utility in the scheme of creation. Its wool woven into cloth would protect the Brahman from cold in winter, besides covering his shame. The poor animal feeds on grass and drinks water from the stream. It is so meek and harmless and there is no sense in killing it for rituals.

Lalleshwari seems to have disapproved of the Kaula-practice of worship in which wine, meat and bread were used. The VĀMA-MARG or Left-hand Way of Shakti Puja may have been practised even at the house of her father-in-law. One of her vakhs points to this. To her it was perversion of religion to practise 'Tantra-Vidya' for obtaining occult powers or 'siddhis'.

For Brahmans, the donkey has been an untouchable animal. Donkey-owners have all along been the people of the lower castes in Kashmir. She admonishes the owner of a donkey to take care of the beast lest it should stray into the saffron field of another person. For his negligence or intentional mischief, he will have to bear punishment in this world or hereafter and he will have to suffer alone. Nobody will share his punishment. The Vakh in which she says this has been interpreted as a metaphor. The donkey stands for our mind. Allowing the mind to fatten on what belongs to others is a sin. It is always good to hold the donkey of the mind under control and to have the rod of understanding (vivek) or discernment ready for the obstinate beast.

In the hour of trial, great Indian women have suffered for the achievement of great ends. Mythology and history are full of stories of such women. Mandodari revolted against the evil ways of her husband, Ravana. Draupadi suffered for the ideals of justice which the Pandavas cherished. Many historical women of India laid down their lives for the good of the country. In her own way, Lalleshwari too suffered for the good of mankind, as all

[1]There must have been all the four castes of Hindus in the Kashmir Valley at the time when Lalleshwari lived.

saints do. Through self-mortification and yogic discipline, she came to know the mysteries of existence. When the Truth was known to her, she taught the lesson of the universal fraternity of man. She says that Shiva abides in us all. It is the same current of Godhead which flows through the veins of mankind, in whatever part of the world we may live and to whatever race we may belong. The same SHIVA shines forth through all, may we call ourselves Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian.

Spiritually-attained persons are the greatest benefactors of mankind. They build a correct perspective of the universe and propagate correct human values. They help us knit ourselves into the fabric of a vast community of men and women and make this world a better place to live in. Wars and bickerings become irrelevant and preposterous. Lalleshwari stands in the vanguard of spiritual giants of the world and continues to be the coveted ideal of the women of Kashmir.

CHAPTER IX

Lalleshwari—The Pioneer of Bhakti Movement

SINCE the time too long to be measured, even from the day he came to inhabit the earth, man instinctively fell on his knees and prayed. He wondered at his surroundings, at the exalted forms of Nature. He may have raised the song of thanks and praised the glory of God. Perhaps the mystery of the universe bewildered him. What his first prayer was nobody can tell. He must have worshipped the Maker of the World in his simple way. Before long he started the never-ending quest for Truth and since then, the search has been carried on by generation after generation of man.

Thousands of years ago, the Aryans worshipped the powers of Nature—the sun, the moon, fire, air, water and earth. These were personified as gods and oblations were made to them. They prayed for health, wealth and riches in cattle and crops. Of course, growth of human thought has brought about a great change in the nature and form of our prayers. All the same, the mystery of the universe still bewilders us. Philosophies and religious theories have been put forward by wise men and saints. But our knowledge is inadequate to explain everything. Science and religion have been making efforts to get at the heart of Truth.

Indian saints and Rishis spent their lives experimenting with different disciplines for arriving at the ultimate basis of existence and these disciplines or systems are called yogas Yogic practices yielded great and strange experiences. Through these experiences

man obtained joy of a lasting nature. They also brought peace of mind to the Yogis who were no longer troubled by their questions. They found solution to the eternal problems of man. Gaining higher consciousness, they lived in the gracious presence of the supreme Being.

All these saints and prophets, whether of the east or the west, have laid down that for higher experiences of Truth and bliss, humility and submission to God's Will are necessary. Devotion to Him, who has been called by so many names, is essential whether we adopt one discipline or another. Even in Scientific inquiry, dedication and involvement are necessary for achieving success in any field. In religion, such dedication and involvement is called Bhakti or devotion. When we obliterate our individual personality and get immersed in prayer and praise of God, we become true Bhaktas or devotees. It is a state of total Love for God.

We have got so many examples of true Bhaktas in our country. Guru Nanak, Sant Kabir, Meera Baai, Sant Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, et al are some of the known names of great saints and Bhaktas. Muslim Sufi-saints like Khawaja Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, Amir Khusro and Khawaja-Moin-ud-Din Chishti too belong to this category of saints. Swami Ramakrishna Parmahamsa was a very great Bhakta of modern times. He lived in the knowledge of God and sent out his disciples like Swami Vivekananda, to spread the message of truth among the people of the world.

Lalleshwari too was a great Bhakta. In fact, she lived a life of devotion to God before them all. She may well be called the forerunner of Bhakti Movement in India. We have called her a yogi. Devotional love for God is a yoga in itself. It is said to lead to higher consciousness, mystical experience and bliss. The quality of divine love is laid down by Shri Ramakrishna as follows: "When a man sheds tears and when his hair stand on end if he utters the name of Hari or Rama even once, then you may know for certain that he no longer needs to perform any rituals Then only does he have the right to renounce them, or rather, they themselves will drop away from him Then it will be enough merely to chant the name of Rama or Hari or just the word Om..." A genuine devotee experiences joy of a divine kind : even as he attends to his daily chores, the bliss of divine love stays with him Lalleshwari was passionately in love with Shiva by which name she calls the

Supreme Being. Sant Kabir chose Rama as his divine Beloved. His verse runs

> *"Kabira lutna hai to luti lai*
> *Ram naam ki loot..........."*

> *"If you can plunder, plunder,*
> *Let the name of Rama be your booty;*
> *Otherwise, later you'll repent,*
> *When you breathe your last."*

For Mira Baai the divine beloved took the form of Krishna. "For me Krishna, and none else, is my Beloved". Shri Rama-Krishna, was absorbed in the love of Maha Kali and Lalleshwari chose Shiva as the holy name of the Universal Being.

From her childhood she had performed her 'puja' of Shiva in the local temple and at Harshishwar. After marriage, at day-break, she worshipped Shiva in the temple at Pampar. With the passage of time her love for Shiva had deepened. She says :

> *"Chanting the name of Shiva, fixing one's mind on 'Suham' as the inaudible vibration of each breath, even while attending to worldly material objects, one finds that Parama Shiva is always pleased".*

Shiva became the breath of her life. Her intense devotional love yielded results. Her preceptor gave her the Word of initiation. She practised worship of Shiva with a true lover's madness. Nothing but Shiva occupied her mind and her worship was unqualified. She says :

> *"Waking in the small hours of the morning,*
> *when the moon was about to set,*
> *How, I bore the pangs of my Lord's Love;*
> *Singing my love-lorn song, like a nightingale,*
> *I woke my Beloved;*
> *Meditating on him, I was purified".*

With such a burning desire to meet Shiva, her Beloved could not leave her in the lurch for long. She had suffered terribly forlorn days in His absence. She had felt like one who had not a penny to

pay the ferryman across the river of life. She had wept over her helpless condition. At times she had thought she was towing the boat of her life with untwined yarn. She had been in a wretched state of mind like that of a frustrated lover. But her steadfast love and intense worship of Shiva at last bore fruit. Her Guru (preceptor) told her to abandon the cares of the outer world and look for the Lord within herself and she acted upon the Word of her teacher. At last she met her Beloved in her own self: in a state of super-consciousness, she was united with Shiva. She found that her individual self and her Beloved Shiva were one. He was all-pervading. He was within and without her. He was everything that be there. He was her own being. The lover and the beloved were united for ever. The whole creation was experienced as the expression of Shiva. She says :

"One, who sees himself and another as equals,
Who faces the day of joy and night of sorrow alike,
Who is freed from the throughts of duality,
Surely sees the God of gods."

When she experienced Shiva, her joy knew no bounds. She says :

"The impurity of gold of love burnt away when,
Putting it in the crucible, I heated it in the forge :
A frozen sheet of water, I melted by the fire of Love !
When the frost was gone, the sun shone betimes.
I, Lalla, was quite at peace,
When I found that I and He were one".

She was happy and contented now and sang of her bliss in her union with Shiva. Gone were the days when she had complained of her sorrow of separation. At one time she had said :

"The very six you have are found in me too,
O God of the Blue-throat!. In separation
From you, I am forlorn and wretched;
The only difference between us is that you
are the master of six while I am slave to them".

But in union with her Lover, she says .

> *"Passionate with longing in mine eyes,*
> *Searching wide and seeking nights and days*
> *Lo ! I beheld the truthful one, the wise*
> *Here in mine own house to fill my gaze.*
> *That was the day of my lucky star.*
> *Breathless, I held him my guide to be,*
> *So my lamp of knowledge blazed afar,*
> *Fanned by slow breath from the throat of me.*
> *Then my bright soul to myself revealed,*
> *Winnowed I abroad my inner light.*
> *And with darkness all around me concealed.*
> *Did I garner Truth and held him tight".*[1]

Her perspective of life had changed completely. No longer did she bother about worldly troubles. Love of Shiva had become synonymous with love of mankind. Now her articles of worship, like the kusha-grass, flowers, sandal-wood, grains of rice, and water, one and all, were found to be embodiments of Shiva. How could she offer these to Shiva himself. Ritualistic worship had lost meaning and purpose for her. She had become a *Jeevanmukhta*; *i.e.*, freed and emancipated while still alive.

Her emancipation flowed out in teaching her contemporaries that religious bigotry is the outcome of foolishness and ignorance. When, owing to intense Love of God, one becomes enlightened, the artificial walls of caste and creed, race and religion automatically tumble down. In true knowledge and understanding, love takes place of hate; selfishness, greed and lust are known to be waylayers and robbers on the path of knowledge. We are all God's children who resides in us all Lalleshwari makes this clear with the help of concrete examples. She says :

> *Ice, snow and water, these be three,*
> *That to thy vision separate seem :*
> *But when the sun of understanding shines,*
> *They are reduced to one to the eyes that see".*

1. Translation by J. Rudrappa.

Again,

"Shiva is like the sun shining everywhere,
Understand this; do not discriminate between a Hindu and a Mussalman.

If you are wise, recognize yourself.
That is the direct recognition of God".

CHAPTER X

Lalleshwari and Bhakta Kabir

IT IS NATURAL that all wise men think alike. They have similar experiences. In case of saints too this holds good. Their minds are cleaned of the dust and dirt of petty considerations. The love of devotees flows out as love for their fellow-men. Having attained higher consciousness, Bhaktas view this world in the light of non-duality. We shall illustrate the point by comparing Lalleshwari with Sant Kabir. Like all god-men, Sant Kabir too was pained to see people divided on the basis of caste and religion. He found that, out of ignorance and lack of true knowledge, different communities fell out with one another on trivial matters. Religious fanaticism had raised its ugly head and roamed about the streets. The high caste and low caste people shunned and hated one another. Being sincere and enlightened, Bhakta Kabir taught the lesson of unity of Being, like Lalleshwari. He says :—

"The meek and the wicked
Are all children of the same Creator.
From one Light
All has come to be !
Good and bad
Are mere phantoms
Of one's own mind".[1]

[1]Translation by Sahadev Kumar : The Vision of Kabir,

Lalleshwari Says :—

"You are the sky, so are you the earth;
You are the day, the atmosphere, and the night;
You are the grain, the sandal-wood, flowers and water;
When you are everything,
What may I offer to you ?' .

Again —

"Looking for the Moon within me,
I came out in search of the like of Him;
I found Narayana in this and Narayana in that,
I found Narayana permeating everything.
Wherefore this multiplicity of forms, then ?".

Sant Kabir found Beloved God in himself as much as Lalleshwari found it. Both saints tell us that God is within us. Kabir Says :

"O Servant, where do you seek me ?
Lo ! I am beside you.
I am neither in the temple nor in the mosque,
I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash,
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies,
Nor in Yoga and renunciation.
If you are a seeker, you will at once see Me;
You will see Me in the twinkling of an eye.
Says Kabir : listen, O Sadhu, God is the breath of all breath."

Lālleshvari says :

"Attaching myself to my body, I lost you completely;
My day was done searching for you.
Beholding you within me,
Me and Shiva were united in ecstasy".

Again :

"He laughs, sneezes, coughs and yawns,
He bathes at all holy places daily,
He is obvious all the year round,
He is close to you ! Recognize him if you will

After all her fond search for Love, Lalleshwari discovered the 'PANDIT', the divine Soul, within. Her preceptor had told her to see Him within. She had acted upon the precept vigorously. In the end she did find the Lord there in herself. Separation from the Beloved was sheer ignorance. Kabir too says the same thing. His great devotion had lifted the veil and given him the vision of God. He says:

"Your God (Saain) is hidden in you as fragrance in flowers;
Why do you then run about in forests like deer in search of musk."

Lalleshwari stresses the point. God reveals himself to those who are pure of mind. We must give up anger, greed and pride and purify the mind of unclean thoughts. It is very essential to control the mind if we want to walk on the path of love. Our mind is like a swift-footed horse. It runs away tens of thousands of miles in a jiffy. Lalleshvari says:

"He who has slain the thieves, greed, lust and pride,
Having slain them, has become humble,
Has been able to meditate on God, naturally,
And considered material wealth but dust and ashes."

We must control our mind, be honest, truthful, sincere, affectionate and considerate, if we are determined to see God within us. Merely going to pilgrimages and telling the rosary cannot help us. We are told that so long as our mind is not contiolled and is not focussed on God, leaving home for forest hermitages or seeking him in holy places will not help us. Bhakti or divine Love demands concentration of thought on God. Once God's love is attained, it issues in the love of Man. Kabir says:—

"If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me.
Thou shalt meet me in a moment of time".
"I and you are of one blood, and one life animates us all.
From one mother the world is born. What knowledege is this which keeps us apart?".

Both devotees had faced hardships in the beginning. Both admit it. Lalleshwari says :—

"Mere reading of scriptures hurt my tongue and palate,
I did not do a deed worthy of you ;
Telling the beads of a rosary, my finger and thumb became raw,
The duality in my mind did not disappear so".

Sant Kabir echoes the same sentiment. He says :—

"An age has passed since I have been telling the beads,
But the twist of my mind did not disappear thus.
Giving up the rosary of the hand,
Tell we must the rosary of the mind".

Both of them were ardent lovers of mankind. Discrimination between one man and another, on the grounds of birth, the high and the low, the Hindu and the Mussalman, was hateful to them.

Sant Kabir was sore at the attitude of the upper caste people, as was Lalleshwari. He says :—

"A God-realized man has no caste. Do not ask him to what caste he belongs.
Talk to him of true knowledge. Ask for the price of the sword and not of the sheath in which it lies".

Both saints laid stress upon religion and morality in everyday life. Practical religious conduct was more important than theoretical knowledge of it. Leading a morally-good life based on the principles and religious teachings is important for God-realization. Mere theoretical knowledge does not do one much good. It is better to be an ignorant, good man than to be a learned, wicked man. *Use of knowledge in practice is the thing.* Lalleshwari has a vakh or two to this effect. She says :—

"It is easy to read but difficult to act upon what one reads;
Natural flow of thought on God is rare and hard;
As my practice became intense, scriptures I forgot,
I attained bliss without a shadow of doubt".

Kabir Says :—

> *"Talking about Truth is sugary sweet, but doing, bitter as poison,*
> *Giving up talking, have faith in action.*
> *So poison shall change into elixir of life"*

Lalleshwari accused pseudo-scholars. She says that some read religious books parrot-like. As a parrot repeats 'Ram ! Ram !' from a cage, so do they repeat texts from religious books.

They do not chew and digest them. They are pretenders to learning. For them it is a mere pretension to read the Gita. It is not so easy to practise the lessons taught in this great book. She had read the Gita and was still reading it by acting upon the teachings of the Lord. Mere recitation of the Gita or the holy Quran is a parrot-like exercise.

Lalleshwari lived a wholly detached life. She had fought her way through the battle of life in a non-attached way. As a true devotee, all her actions had been dedicated to Shiva, her spiritual Beloved. She had taken the scandalous remarks and gibes and even the praises of her followers with a smile, and she had never allowed her mental equilibrium to be upset. She says :

> *"Choose a home-life, choose a hermitage,*
> *Choose to pass thine years as pleaseth thee,*
> *If desire does not thine heart change,*
> *Then as thou hast learnt, so thou shalt be".*[1]

There is an anecdote illustrating Lalleshwari's mental and moral equipoise. As she wandered about in a God-mad state, some people made salutations to her. There were some who made fun of her and gibed at her. But she was not disturbed Once she approached a cloth-vendor who was courteous. She asked him to give her two pieces of cloth of equal length and weight. She put the pieces of cloth on her shoulders and walked on. When she received a jibe or taunt, she put a knot on one piece of cloth, when she heard a word of praise or received an obeisance, she put a knot on the other piece. As the day was done and evening set in, she went back to

[1]Lalla's religion, J. Rudrappa *Koshur* Samāchār, 1970-71.

the vendor. She asked him to weigh the two pieces of cloth again and see which was heavier, the one which carried the gibes or the one carrying praises and salutations. The vendor was surprised. She had a lesson to teach. A person deeply absorbed in love of God and love of man is not affected by praises or abuses of people. She poured forth the following verse-quatrain :

"Let them reproach and call me names,
Let them say what suits their choice,
Let them worship me with flowers so sweet,
Since I am pure and clean, what profit will they make"?

and

"He hurled a thousand abuses at me ;
I did not take it to heart.
If I am a true devotee of Shiva,
How can my mirror get defiled ?"

Lalleshwari and Sant Kabir, both had complete faith in their respective preceptors. The Guru's word was gospel for them. In spiritual endeavour, as much as in temporal activity, a guide and teacher is a must. None can achieve success without a teacher's initiation and guidance. The teacher is a helper, a mentor and a friend. With regard to his Preceptor, Sant Kabir says .

"My teacher and the Lord stand before me,
At whose feet shall I prostrate myself ?
Sacrifice shall I myself to the Guru,
But for whose guidance, I would not have beheld the Lord !"

Lalleshwari too acknowledges her debt of gratitude to her Guru, Sedamol. She says .

"I asked my Guru a thousand times,
The name of the Lord known by negatives,
I was tired asking again and again,
But lo ! out of nothing, Something emerged
true and great".

Again :

> "*My Guru gave me the Word,*
> *From the outer world, get into yourself* :
> *His word transformed Lalla*
> *Who thenceforth started dancing nude*".

Both the saints attained supreme consciousness and enlightenment through Bhakti or devotional love. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din *alias* Nunda-Rishi of Kashmir has been a great saint of Kashmir. He was a junior contemporary, and disciple of Lalleshwari. In one of his long prayer-poems, he says that Lalla-Yogeshwari outdid her Guru she became a greater saint than Siddha Srikantha. Nunda prays to God to grant him a boon like that.

Both the saints brought a healing touch to the wounded heart of their contemporaries. When religious fanaticism ran riot in the ignorant hearts of the people, both the saints preached the message of love and brotherhood among Hindus and Muslims of their time. Their message is relevant today as it was relevant then. In fact, the teaching of saints is always relevant and meaningful.

It is not surprising that when Hindus and Muslims sought to pay homage to Lalleshwari and Sant Kabir after their death, both communities wanted to perform the funeral rites according to their own custom. Both Hindus and Muslims had been zealously devoted to the saints And God wrought a miracle. Both the communities were puzzled to find flowers in place of their mortal remains, when the covering was removed.

As in life, so in death, both belonged to God—The Great Lover.

CHAPTER XI

The Language of the Lalla-Vakh

IN ANCIENT TIMES, Kashmir was the cradle of Sanskrit. The contribution of Kashmiri writers to Sanskrit literature in India has been significant A few prominent names are mentioned here to illustrate the point. KALHAN wrote the RAJATARINGINI (the saga of the kings of Kashmir) in Sanskrit verse and the book remains a unique historical document, unrivalled to this day. Bilhana, as already mentioned, has been a famous Sanskrit romantic poet who paints in poems the matchless beauty of Kashmir. Kshemendra, a versatile writer, gave the world of Sanskrit literature, books on almost all subjects. His writings on politics, social life of Kashmir, astronomy, and mathematics are considerable. Besides the writers on secular subjects, Kashmir has produced a long line of saint-poets and philosophers whose contribution to the religious literature in Sanskrit has been voluminous. Vāsugupta, Somānanda, Utpalācharya, Abhinava Gupta and Khemraja are only a few names of the prominent among them. Their works on Kashmir Shaiva Philosophy are monumental.

Side by side with the classical Sanskrit of the Pandit and the elite, a vernacular Kashmiri appears to have existed here, in the 13th century and, somewhere in the middle of this century, books were written in this language. MAHĀNAYĀ PRAKASHA by Shitikanṭha is an extant volume, but the language of this book is far removed from modern Kashmiri. It is difficult to understand. It must have taken about a hundred years for his vernacular language to grow and develop into the form in which LALLA-VAKH were uttered We are happy to find that the Lalla-Vakh

are not only understood today but are also appreciated and enjoyed. Their language is very much the Kashmiri of the present times. It is surprisingly modern.

One thing deserves to be emphasized here. Lalleshwari was a *Yogini* and she had poetical inspiration. She felt the urge to express her sublime experiences, and her inspired poetry flowed out spontaneously, as water gushes out of natural springs. The water flows through channels, the depressions and the gorges already present, so also is it true of a poet's inspiration. The language Lalla-ded used was not of her making: it was the natural vehicle of thought at her disposal. She made use of it, unconsciously. It must have been her mother-tongue. When a true poet sings, he does so through a medium which comes in handy. Of course, her greatness lies in moulding the language so as to be the appropriate means for the expression of her pregnant, spiritual thought. She speaks in vivid pictures and concrete imagery, taken from everyday life around her. It is difficult, for instance, to get at the subtle NĀDĪS. She uses a metaphor from the apothecary's paraphernalia. She says wistfully that if it were possible for her to catch hold of the Nāḍīs, she would tear them to shreds ; pound them in a mortar with a pestle ; change the pounded materials into a syrup and then drink it to cure herself of the difficulties on the spiritual path. Very often she adapts the language to her thought and experience. But for the imagery and metaphor, perhaps, her subtle experiences could not be communicated with accuracy and force. Jesus Christ spoke in parables : and exalted, subtle thought has been communicated, in the best literature of the world by the masters, indirectly. Audio-visual pictures help in accuracy of expression.

The Lalla-Vakh are aphoristic in style A lot of thought is compressed in a simple, single, verse-quatrain. Thought is not carried over from one quatrain to another, for each quatrain serves as a unit of thought. The alternate lines of each quatrain generally rhyme together, but this scheme is not rigidly followed. The vakhs have a metre of their own which lends them to serious recitation by classical singers of Kashmir. When we listen to the recitation of the Lalla-Vakh, we feel elevated in thought and it has a deep emotional appeal. It brings peace to the soul of the listener.

Sometimes Lalleshwari seems to work as a conscious artist. She arranges the nuances of diction and the structure of the lines so as to suit the gravity or lightness of thought and feeling. When the thought is thundering, the language rumbles ; when the sentiment is soft and pacifying, the language is soft and sweet like honey. She uses exclamatory words to enhance the effect of calling attention, or expressing desperation. She invokes the Lord with interjections and often uses onomatopoeic words which reverberate. Lalleshwari is justly called the first and the best of Kashmiri poets, for the content and form of her poetry has not been matched so far. She is the first to have raised Kashmiri to the status of a literary language.

There is, however, a marked difference between the language of the *Lalla-Vakh* and modern Kashmiri. In the vakhs, as is natural, we find many an archaism and words which are obsolete now. Besides, other languages have made their impact on Kashmiri since the time of Lalla-ded. During and after the 14th century, Kashmir came under a spate of Persian and Arabic influence. With the Muslim rulers in power here, immigrants from Persia and the Middle East and the Muslim missionaries brought their language and culture along with them. Persian became the court language and the means of communication for the elite. Persian scholars dominated the scene. In the process of interaction of languages and cultures, Kashmiri, indigenous to the land, naturally underwent a great change. So the Kashmiri of today is full of Persian words, phrases, idioms, and morphological forms. Languages evolve naturally and Kashmiri too has evolved over the centuries, though not to a very great extent.

But the language of Lalla-ded is free from the impact of Persian, largely. It may be because she came from and lived in the countryside and the language of the court had not made much impact in the rural areas. But more probable is the reason that, by the time Islam spread in the Valley, she had matured and her language, learnt so early and unconsciously in childhood, became her natural means of communication.

The idiom of Lalleshwari continues to be our idiom : the phrases and idiom she used are still in common currency. We use her metaphor and simile today with pleasure and pride, particularly as we find these to be the most apt and useful expressions for loaded thought in serious situations. Without these, our language

becomes hollow and bald. Her word and phrase and metaphor are not merely ornaments but have become essentials of our tongue. They have become part and parcel of Kashmiri language.

As already said, the Lalla-Vakh have come down to us by word of mouth over the centuries. We cannot say with any certainty what changes the language has undergone in the process of oral transmission. That is the subject for the philologist. It is of great interest for us, nevertheless, to look into the broad characteristics of the language of the vakhs.

The first and the most conspicuous feature is that though they are not written in Sanskrit, plenty of Sanskrit words are used in them. In fact, the test of sifting the genuine from the spurious *vakhs*, which have grown in number by the efforts of enthusiastic imitators, is the recognition of this linguistic facet of the vakhs. When we come across a vakh, in which Sanskrit is replaced by Persian and Arabic diction, we have a feeling that the vakh is not genuine. It is a subsequent addition.

1. Examples of Sanskrit words used bodily without change —

Shuni=void ; *sparsh*=touch ; *gagan*=sky ; *abhaysa*=practice ; *kleśa*=pain, affliction , *ākāśa*=sky ; *salila*=water ; *dvār*=door ; *mukti*=freedom ; *kusum*=flower ; *mūdh*=ignorant ; dull ; *sadbhāva* =in true state, sincerely ; *trina*=grass ; *smarana*=to recall to mind, to remember ; *shāstra*=scripture ; *niśchai*=to settle, to fix upon ; *kesar*=the mane of a lion ; *sva-ātmā*=oneself ; *ahankār*= ego (tism) ; *bhai*=fear ; *tattva-vid*=one who knows the reality ; etc.

2. Examples of words derived from Sanskrit :

rav from *ravi* =sun ; *lavan* from *lāvanya*=salt ; *āhār* from *aharya* =to take food. There are scores of such words in the *vakhs*.

3. Examples of Sanskrit words slightly modified to agree with Kashmiri phonetical peculiarities :—

sahaz (*sahaja*) ; *dvarlabh* (*durlabha*) ; *bramavon* (*bhramana, bhramat*) ; *yūzan* (*yojana*) ; *gyān* (*jñāna*) ; *yod̂* (*yodvai*) ; etc.

4. There are words which are derived from Sanskrit roots. Examples :—

Kar=do (from Sanskrit root *kri*) ; *voth*=stand up (from *ut-tish-tha* ; *gatsh*=go (rom Sanskrit *gachhati*, root *gam*) etc.

5. The Action-words (verbs) in the *vakhs* are, by and large, the same as are used today :—

āyas=I came ; *gayas*=I went ; *vuchhum*=I saw ; *dima*=I shall give ; *bani*=will happen ; *ās*=I came ; *chhuy*=You have ; *zānakh*=you will know ; *dapun*=to say ; *rozy*=will remain ; *tsōlum* =I bore ; *tsôlum*=he ran away from me ; etc.

6. There is a fair sprinkling of other words, used as nouns-substantive ; adjectives ; interjections , connectives, and words falling under the category of other parts of speech, which we use today in the same form as used in the *vakhs*. Examples :—

bvachha=hunger ; *treish*=thirst ; *akh*=one ; *vāv*=wind ; *hôl*=curved, not straight ; *kyāh*=what ; *hāi*=alas ; *tas*=to him ; *syôd*=straight ; *ta*=and , *zānh*=never, ever , *chanda*=pocket ; *hār*=cowrie ; *vāzas*=to the cook ; *kaṭh*=sheep ; *dyôl*=loose ; *nat-sun*=to dance, to wander, etc.

7. We have also numerous compound-words and phrases in the *vakhs* which have enriched Kashmiri language. These word-compounds, phrases and idiomatic expressions have retained their orginal form, meaning and connotation.

loha-langar ; kulfa-rôst vān ; vuzamala ta trata ; mandiñeñ gatakar ; petsiv kān ; abakh chhān ; pahali-rôst khyōl ; akisay razi lamun ; vākh ta vatsun , tār dyun ; rāvan tyōl ; pān grata kadun; kāhan gāv rāvani ; kharas gor dyun ; kôm yājen teel, svayikul dvada ṣati sagavun ; etc.

The vocabulary, the phrases, the figures of speech, the imagery and metaphors used in the LALLA-VAKH are a treasure-house of Kashmiri language. These have not lost their pristine vigour and spice. We draw upon the vakhs freely and unconsciously, whenever occasion arises. The large number of Sanskrit words in the vakhs reminds us of the glorious days of Sanskrit scholarship in Kashmir. On the whole the langnage of the LALLA-VAKH is noticeably modern.

Appendix A

Miscellaneous Vakhs of Lalleshwari

1 *Hā mālı ! kyāzı chhukh vuṭhān seki lvar,*
Ami raṭi hā-māli paki na nāv;
Lyūkhuy yi nārañı karmanı rıkhi,
Ti māli heki na phırith kānh.

Why are you twısting flimsy threads of sand ?
Thus cannot your boat be towed on the strand.
The writ of fate, so defined and large,
Cannot be scraped out by human decree.

2 *Atha ma bā trāvun khar bā,*
Lūka hanz kvang var kheyıy;
Tati kus bā dāriy thar bā,
Yati nañıs kartal peyiy.

Let not your donkey be on the loose;
Lest it should graze on another's saffron field.
Who will stand by you
When sword-thrusts strıke your naked body ?

3 *Latan hund māz lāryom vatan*
Akiy havnam akichıy vath;
Yim yim bōzan tim kōna matan,
Lalı būz shatan kunıy kath

Far and wide roamed I, wıth soles sore,
Tıll I arrived at the only truth;
Elated will they be who hear of it
That Lalla's hundred paths converged on One.

4. *Ṭyoth modur tai myūṭh zahar,*
Yas yūt tshunukh jatan bāv;
Yemi yath kâray kal ta kahar,
Su tath shahar vatith pev.

The bitter tastes sweet and the sweet, bitter like poison,
To the lover advanced in effortful love;
With determined devotion to the Supreme,
Surely you'll attain the goal you seek.

5 *Tana-mana gayas ba tas kunuy,*
Būzam satacḥ gantā vazān;
Tath shāyi dāranāyi dāran râṭam,
Ākāsh ta prakāsh kŏrum sara.

Body and mind, I took to Him,
Bells of Truth rang in me.
Meditating on Him with unified mind,
Lo ! I did experience Heaven and Light.

6 *Kava chhukh divān aninei batsha,*
Trukai chhukh ta andaray atsh;
Shīv chhuy atiy tai kun mo gatsh,
Sahaza kathi meyāni karto patsh.

Why are you groping like the blind ?
Your wisdom should lead you inwards.
Shiva is there within, no need to search Him out of doors;
Have faith in honest advice, you must.

7 *Lal bo drāyas lolarei,*
Tshāndān lūsum den kyohŏ rāth;
Vuchhum Pandith pananiy garei,
Suy me roṭamas nechhtar ta sāth.

I, Lalla, left home looking for my Love :
Night and day I spent in search of Him.
In the end, the wise, the learned one was found at home !
That moment became the most propitious for me.

8 *Mūdo krai chhai na dārun ta pārun,*
Mūdo krai chhai na rachhīn kāyi;
Mūḍo krai chhai na dih sandārun,
Sahaz vetsārun chhuy vopadīsh.

Foolish man, work is not adorning yourself,
Nor is it looking after your body :
It is not to keep the physical frame in trim,
But to meditate on God, is the lesson to you.

9 *Tshāndān lūsȧs pani pānas,*
Tsepith gyānas vōtum na kūṅtsh;
Laī kȧrmas ta vatsas althānas,
Bȧrī barı bāna ta chevān na kūṅtsh.

Exhausted got I seekıng Myself,
No one realizes the hıdden Truth;
Intense devotion led me to the wine-cellar;
Woeful it ıs that cups lie filled but no one drınks.

10 *Dīv vatā dīvar vatā,*
Petha bona chhuy ikavāth;
Pūz kas karakh hūta baṭā,
Kar mans ta pavanas sangāṭh.

The idol is stone, so is the temple,
Above and below, it ıs one block;
Whom wıll you worship, you foolish man ?
Engage your mınd on the breath you breathe.

11 *Parān parān zev tāl phȧjım,*
Tse yugi kraı tȧjım nānh,
Sumran phirān nyoth ta anguji gȧjim,
Manach duyi tsajım na zānh,

Reading and reading, my palate became raw,
Worthy of you, no deed I dıd do;
Tellıng the rosary, my finger and thumb were sore,
But the gloom of dualıty did not leave me.

12 *Dȧchhınis obras zāyun zānahā,*
Sodaras zānahā kadıth aṭh;
Mendıs rūgıyas vaıdyut zānahā,
Mūdas zanım na pranıth kath.

Much do I know the source of southern cl‹
Fathom would I the deepest of seas,
Easily cure I the leper and the diseased,
But I could not teach a stupid dunce.

13 *Mandàchhi hankal kar tshenĕm,*
Yeli hedun geilun assun prāva;
Āruk jāma karsanā dazem,
Yeli àndaryum khāryuk rōzem vāra.

When shall the chains of shyness break off ?
When gibes and sneers fail to provoke me.
When shall my garment of hesitation burn ?
When the steed of my mind stays at rest.

14 *Kandev karakh kandi-kandei,*
Kandev karakh kandi volās;
Būgai mīṭhi ditith yath kandei,
Ath kandi rozi sūr na ta sās.
Svamana gārun manz yeth kandei,
Yath kandi dapān svarūp nāv;
Lūb mūh tsaliy shūb yiyi kandei,
Yathày kandi tīz tai sōr prakāsh.

O Man ! how long will you attach yourself to the body ?
How long will you adorn it thus ?
You have fed it on the sweet and dainty :
Do seek Him in the body with your whole mind,
For the body's but the tabernacle of the Lord.
Your greed and attachment will drop off in time,
And your body will glow with the flame of Light.

15 *Treishi bvachhi mō kreishināvun,*
Yāñi tsheyiy tāñi sandārun dih;
Phṛath chon dārun ta pārun,
Kaṛ vopakārun svai chhai krai.

Do not deny the body food and water,
Feed the hungry stomach without loss of time,
Fie upon your austerity and self-mortification.
Good deeds done to others is true religion, indeed !

16 *Kus mari tai kas māran,*
Mari kus tai māran kas;
Yus Hara-Hara travith gara-gara karei,
Ada suy mari tai māran tas.

Who will die and who is killed ?
None falls, nor is felled, except one
Neglecting Shiva, who attaches himself to the world,
Verily dies a miserable death.

17 *Gvara shabadas yus yatsh- patsh barei,*
Gyāna- vagi rati tseta tvargas;
Yaṅdāryai shamarith ānaṅd karei,
Ada kus mari tai māran kas.

Who goes by faith in his preceptor's Word,
Who holds the steed of mind with reins of knowledge,
Subduing sense-organs, who enjoys bliss,
Will certainly not die, nor get killed.

18 *Shīl ta mān chhuy poñi krenjei,*
Mvachhi yemi rot māli yod vāv;
Hos yus masta-vāla gandei,
Ti yas tagī tai su ada nihāl

Name and fame are like water in a sieve;
Controlling the mind is as hard as catching air in the fist,
Or tethering an elephant with a strand of hair;
One who can do that is blessed, indeed !

19 *Rangas manz chhuy byon-byon labun,*
Sōruy tsālakh barakh svakh;
Tsakh rāshi ta vair gālakh,
Ada deiṅshakh Shiva sund mvakh.

Diversely disguised is He on the world-stage;
Putting up with everything, you attain peace !
Overcoming anger, jealousy and hate,
Surely His face is revealed to you.

20 *Lōluk nār lvali lalanōvum,*
Maranai mvayas ta rūzas na zarai,
Rangaratshi zātāsay kyāh na rang gōm,
Bo dapun tsōlum kyāh sana karai.

The fire of Love I fondled in my lap, so
That I was extinct before my death;
Into how many colours was dyed my colourless self !
What could I do but bear the slander of pride.

21 *Rāvana manzai rāvun rōvum,*
Ravith athi āyàs bavasarai;
Asān gindān Sahazay prōvum;
Dapanuy korum pānas sarai.

In the process of loss, lost I the sense of loss :
Being lost to the world, discovered I myself.
In a playful spirit did I realize Shiva;
What the people said, I verified in me.

22 *Lōlaki vokhalai valiñj pishim,*
Kvakal tsajim ta rūzàs rasai;
Buzam ta zajim pānas chashim;
Kava zāna tava sati mara kina lasa.
Boi nā mvayas ta boi nā mara,
Yeli achhiv dīñshith kanav būzith keinh bāva.

In the mortar of Love, I pulvarized my heart,
Ungodly thoughts left me and I was chastened;
Roasted and burnt my heart and tasted it;
Little do I know whether it leads me to death or life.
I did not die nor shall I ever die,
When my eyes see, or ears hear, the essence of the Lord.

23 *Damī dyūñṭhum shabnama pevān,*
Damī dyūnṭhum pevān sūr,
Damī dīnṭham anigata rātas
Damī dyūnṭhum dvahas nūr.
Damī asas lokat kūrāh,
Damī sapanis javān pūr,
Damī asas pheirān thōrān,
Damī sapanis dazith sūr.

One moment I saw the dew falling,
Next moment hoar-frost covered the ground;
Now I looked upon pitch-dark night,
But soon there was bright sunlight;
One moment was I just a little girl,
Before long I became a damsel young;
Now was I hale and hearty and moving about,
Next moment I was reduced to ashes and dust.

24 *Damī dīnṭham nad vahavaniy,*
Damī dyūnṭhum sum na ta tār;
Damī dīntham thar phvalavaniy,
Damī dyūnthum gul na tā khār.

Now the river was placid, flowing calm;
Now in spate, without bridge or ferry;
One moment the branch was full abloom,
Next there was neither flower nor thorn.

25 *Damī dīṅthåm gåji dazavaniy,*
Damī dyūṅthum dah na ta nār;
Damī dintham Pāṅdavan haåz majī,
Damī dīntham krajiy mās.

One moment the cooking hearth was aglow with fire,
Next there was neither fire nor smoke;
One moment I saw her as the royal mother of Pandavas,
But soon she was hailed as the potter-aunt.

26 *Keintsan dyutatham ŏrai ālav.*
Keintsav rachāyi nālai veth;
Keintsan achhi laji mas cheth tālav,
Keintsan papith gai hālav kheth.

Some received God's grace unexpectedly,
While some made Herculean efforts all through;
Divinely intoxicated and bewildered were some,
While locusts ate up the ripe, rich crops of others

27 *Grata chhu pheirān zeirei zeirei,*
Ohakuy zāni gratuk tshal;
Grata yeli pheiri tai zavyul neirei,
Gū vāti pānai grata-bal.

Pushing and pulling, the grinding-mill moves;
Only the axle knows the mystery of the mill.
When the mill moves fast, the flour is fine,
People then flock with grist to the mill.

28 *Zanani zāyāyi råti ta kritiy,*
Kårith vodaras bahu klīsh;
Phīrith dvār bazni vati tatiy,
Shiv chhuy krūṭh tai tsein vopadīsh.

Good and bad are born of the Mother,
Causing much pain to her bearing Womb;
Passing through the Gates, back they come there
Shiva is difficult to attain ! Learn thou the lesson.

29 *Yosai shil pīṭhas ta paṭas,*
Soy shil chhai prathavun dish;
Soy shil shūbavanis gratas,
Shiv chhuy krūṭh tai tsein vopadīsh.

The stone adorning the Altar is the stone paving the cobbled road;
It is found everywhere !
The mill looks fine with the self-same stone.
Shiva is difficult to attain ! Learn thou the lesson.

30 *Shiv chhu zavyul zāl vaharith,*
Kranzan manz chhuy tarith keth;
Zinda nai vuchhahan ada kati marith,
Pāna manza pān kad vetsarith kath.

All-compassing Shiva is spread out as the finest net,
It runs through the skeletons of all :
It you can't recognize Him in life, how can you, after death'
Do discriminate between your self and body.

31 *Tsāy dīva gartas ta dai ti srazakh,*
Tseiy dīva ditith kranzan prān;
Tsåiy dīva ṭhani rostuy vazakh,
Kus zāni dīva chon parmān.

O Lord ! You permeate the creatures of the world;
You have infused the spirit of life in all.
Noiseless, your voice is heard all around;
Who can measure and fathom your infinite depths ?

32 *Lal bŏh drāyas kapsi-poshachi såtsåy,*
Kadi ta dūni kårnam yåtsåy lath;
Tayi yeli kharinam zaåji tayei
Vovåri vāna gayam alanz lath.
Dôbi yeli chhavanas dôbi-kani peṭhåy,
Saz ta sāban matshånam yåtsåy;
Såtsi yeli phīranam hani hani katsåy.
Ada Lali me pravåm parma-gath.

Ambitious like the blooming cotton flower was I, Lalla, born;
The gin and the card broke my back;
I was spun into thread so fine;
Soon the weaver hung me on the loom;
The washerman beat me on his plank (stone),
Rubbing soda and soap, a lot of it;
Then the tailor cut me through with scissors so sharp;
Thus, did Lalla attain the state of Light.

33 *Dishi āyas dasha dishi tsalith,*
Tsalith tsôṭum shunt ada vāv;
Shivày dyūnṭhum shāyi shāyi milith,
Sheh ta treh trapimas ta shivày drāv.

I came from my country and roamed in ten quarters,
I sped like wind through ethereal voids;
Shiva I discovered permeating everything.
Closing fast the nine (apertures),
I found Him there, in my own self.

34 *Methyā kapath asath trōvum,*
Manas korum suy vopadish;
Zanas andar kīval zōnum,
Anas khenas kus chhum dvish.

Hypocrisy, deceit and falsehood I gave up,
That was the lesson I taught myself ;
I found the Lord abiding in all ;
Why should I hate eating my food ?

35. *Ȧndara asith nebar tshōndum,*
Pavanan ragan kàrnam sath ;
Dyāna kin Dai zagi kīval zōnum,
Rang gav sangas milith keth.

Despite Shiva in me, how I sought Him abroad !
My vital airs and ducts were infused with Him.
In meditation, I recognized His omnipresence :
The universal play was in harmony with the Lord.

36 *Saṁsāras āyas tapasayi,*
Bvadi prakāsh lobum sahaz ;
Marem na kānh ta mara na kansiy,
Mara neichh ta lasa neichh.

Born was I an ascetic ;
Light of intellect came natural to me.
None shall die to me, nor shall I be missed on death ;
How well for me, whether I live or die !

37 *Damā dama Omkār man paranovum,*
Pānai parān ta pānai bōzān ;
Sūham padas ahaṁ gōlum,
Teli Lal boh vatsas prakāshasthān.

I chanted OM with each breath :
The self that recited was the self that heard !
The I (—ness) was removed from 'That AM I'.
That's how I reached the Abode of Light.

38 *Yi yi karam korum suh artsun,*
Yi rasani vetsorum tīy manthar ;
Yihai logum dihas partsun,
Suy yi parama Shivun tanthar.

My every action was offered to Him,
My every thought became a "Mantra",
Thus used I my body for Him,
Which is the (tantra) mystic symbol of Shiva, indeed !

39. *Ora ti pānai yōra ti pānai,*
Pānai pānas chhu na meilān ;
Pratham asas na mulei danīy,
Svai ha māli chhī āshtsar zān.

He himself is there, as He is here,
Strange ! the two do not seem to meet.
The wonder of wonders is, I trow,
That nothing stands between the two at first.

40 *Zal hā māli lūsuy na pakān-pakān,*
Siriya lāsuy na volagān sumīr ;
Tsandarama lūsuy na marān ta zevān,
Manushi lūsuy na karān nendya.

Water does not tire of flowing for ever,
The sun ever climbs up and down hills,
The moon never tires of birth and death,
And man never tires of back-biting.

41 *Ānchari hānzani hond gayām kanan,*
Nadari chhiva ta heyiv mā ;
Ti būz trukev tim rūdi vanan,
Tseinun chhuva ta tsīniv mā.

The boat-woman of Ānchār Lake hawked :
"The lotus-stalks are here for sale !"*
The wise heard it and remarked pat,
"Take the hint, if you so choose".

42 *Kali sath kval gatshan pātali,*
Akalī zal māli varshun peñ ;
Māmas ṭaki tai masakiy pyali,
Brahman ta tsrali īkavaṭa khen.

Time will there be when generations of the virtuous fall,
Untimely rains will flood the earth,
Men will enjoy food with meat and drink,
And the learned will dine with the unlettered, wicked.

43 *Samsār nāmi tav tatsày,*
Mūdan kitsay tāvana āyei :
Gyāna-mudra chhai yugiyan kitsày,
Su yūga kali kin parzāna āyei.

The changeful world is a hot pan,
Heated for those wanting in wit.
The posture of knowledge is meant for yogis,
Who recognize the Lord through Love for Him.

44 *Äras neiri na modur shīrai,*
Nirviriyas neiri na shūra nāv ;
Murkhas paranāvun chhuy hasitis kashun,
Yas ho dāndas beha tsāv.

*There is a pun on the Kashmiri word 'Nadari', which, apart from meaning 'lotus-stalks', also as a compound means Na-dari (not stable or strong, i.e., transitory : also, 'heyiv, ma' which, apart from connoting the 'won't you buy ?', also covertly, means by slight change in intonation, 'do not buy',

Expect not sweet juice from a sour plum,
A coward can't be called a strong, brave man.
Teaching a dull man is like scratching an elephant ;
A lazy bullock is utterly useless.

'5 *Babari langas mushak nō marei,*
Hūni basti kōphūr neiri na zānh,
Mana yod gārahan pheiriy zeirei,
Na ta shalaṭungei neiriy kyāh.

Sweet basil will not lose its scent,
A dog-hide will not emit camphor-smell ;
Meditate on the Lord, a little effort will do ;
Howling like jackals, else, is useless and vain.

Note : One hundred and one Lalla-vakh have already been translated and commented upon in detail, in the *Ascent of Self* by the author, printed and published in 1978 by Messrs Motilal Banarsidas, Indological Publishers and Booksellers, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. The additional 45 Vakhs in Kashmiri, given here in italics, have been taken from the Journal, *Koshur Samāchār*, 1970-71, and rendered into English by the author.

Appendix B

Some of the *Vakhs* translated into Sanskrit and English

(Sanskrit translation by Rajānak Bhāskarāchārya).

अभ्यासी स्वव्यकास्य लयु वोथू
गगनस सगुण म्यूल समि च्रटा
शून्य गोल अनामय मोतू
युहोय व्वपुदीश छुय बटा ॥

Abhyāsi svavikāsi layi vothū
Gaganas sagun myūl samitsratā;
Shunya gol Anāmai motū,
Yuhoy vopadīsh chhuy bhaṭṭā

अभ्यासेन लय नीते दृश्ये शून्यत्वमागते ।
साक्षिरूपं शिष्यते तच्छान्ते शून्येऽप्यनामयम् ॥

By constant practice, (the individualized limited self) was dissolved into the Unlimited (Self) !
The Qualified Being merged with Ākāśa, (The Ethereal Unqualified Being), into one homogeneous whole !
The Void melted away. Nothing was left over except the *Anāmaya*, —the Stainless, the Pure, the Weal, Parama Śiva;
That is the lesson to you, O learned man !

वाख मानस क्वल अक्वल ना अते
छ्वपि मोद्रि अति ना प्रवीश
रोज़ान शिव-शक्त ना अते
म्वतियय कुंह त सुय व्यपुदीश ॥

Vākh, Mānas, Kwal, Akwal na atei,
Tshwapi, Mudri ati nā pravīsh;
Rozān Shiv-Shakt na atei,
Mvatiyay kuṅh ta suy vöpadīsh.

वाङ् मानसं च तन्मुद्रे शिव-शक्ति कुलाकुले ।
यत्र सर्वमिदं लीनमपुदेशं परं तु तत् ॥

Word, Thought, Kula and Akula cease to be there !
Neither silence nor yogic postures gain you admission there;
Neither Shiva, nor Shakti abide there !
Whatever remains is That; this is the Lesson !

दमाह् दम कोरमस दमनहाले,
प्रज़ल्योम द्‌फ तु नन्येयम ज़ाथ
अन्दर्युम प्रकाश न्यबर छ्योटुम
गटि रोटुम तु करमस थफ ॥

Damāh dam kŏrmas damanhāle,
Prazalyom daph ta nañeiyam zātu,
Andrium Prakāsh nĕbar tshŏṭum,
Gaṭi rŏtum ta karmas thaph.

ततः प्राणा दिरोधेन प्रज्वाल्य ज्ञानदीपिकाम् ।
स्फुटं दृष्टो मया तत्र चित्स्वरूपो निरामयः ॥

For a moment I suppressed the bellows of respiration,
Lo and behold ! The Lamp lit up brightly and I realized my Self !
The light within me sparkled out;
In the encompassing darkness, I seized at It (the bright gem of Self) and gripped It tightly.

पर तय पान यम्य सोम मोन
यम्य ह्यूह् मोन द्यन किहो राथ
यम्यसय अद्वय मन सपुन
तमिय ड्यूंठुय सुरग्वरनाथ ॥

Par tai pān yĕmi sŏm mon
Yĕmi hyūh mon dĕn kyoha rāth,

Yĕmisay advai man sāṅpun,
Tamiy dyūṅṭhuy Sura-Gurunāth.

आत्मा परो दिनं रात्रिर्यस्य सर्वमिदं समम् ।
भातमद्वैतमनसस्तेन दृष्टोऽमरेश्वरः ॥

He who has deemed another and himself as equals,
He who has deemed the day (of joy) and the night (of sorrow) alike;
He whose mind has become free from duality,
He, and he alone, has seen the Lord of the chiefest of gods.

नाथा ! न पान न पर ज़ोनुम
सदै बूदुम यि क्व दीह्
च़ बो-ह् बो-ह् च़ म्युल ना ज़ोनुम
च़ कुस बो क्वसु छु सन्दीह् ॥

Nāthā ! na pān na par zonum,
Sadai būdum yi kwa dih;
(Sadai būdum yiko dih);
Tsa bŏh, bŏh tsa myul nā zonum,
Tsa kus bŏh kwasa chhum sandīh.

नाथ न त्वं न चात्माऽपि ज्ञातो देहाभिमानतः
स्वस्यैक्यं च त्वया तेन का आवामिति संशयः

O Master ! I never differentiated between myself and others;
Always did I mortify this unreal body;
Alt. (Always did I realize that all bodies were the same)
Thou art I, and I Thou; but I have not learnt how to merge the two.
Who art Thou and who am I ? In a state of doubtful (non-recognition) am I.

शिव वा कीशव वा जिन वा
कमलजनाथ नामदारिन युह्
म्य अबलि कांस्यतन बवरोज़
सु वा सु वा सु वा सुह् ॥

Śiv vā kishav vā Jinn vā
Kamalajanāth nāmadhārin yuh,

Mĕ abali kȧsitan bavarŏz,
Su vā su vā ṣu vā suh.

शिवो वा केशवो वापि जिनो वा द्रुहिणोऽपि वा
संसाररोगेणाक्रान्तामबलां मां चिकित्सतु ॥

Shiva or Keshva or the Buddha,
Call Him what you may !
Let Him release me from the yoke of worldy afflictions, weak and helpless as I am.

बान गोल तय प्रकाश आव ज़ूने
चंद्र गोल तय मो तुय च्यथ
च्यथ गोल तय केंहति ना कुः
गै "भूरभुव: स्व:" व्यसर्जिथ क्यथ ॥

Bān gŏl tai prākash āv zūneī,
Tsandr gŏl tai mŏtuy tstĕh;
Tsĕth gŏl tai kĕnhti na kuneī;
Gai Bhŏŏr Bhwāh Swāh vĕsarzıth kĕth.

भानौ नष्टे काशते चन्द्रबिम्बं,
तस्मिन्नष्टे काशते चित्तमेव ।
चित्ते नष्टे दृश्जातंक्षणेन,
पृथ्व्यादीदं गच्छति क्वापि सर्वम् ॥

:n the Sun melted away, the Moon shone forth,
When the Moon disappeared, Consciousness remained;
Consciousness too dissolved, there remained Nothing,
The three sacred Interjections (Vyahrtis) too departed at last.

तन्त्र गलि तय मन्त्र म्वच
मन्त्र गोल तय मो तुय च्यथ
च्यथ गोल तय केंहति न कुने
शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गौ ॥

Tanthr gali tai manthr mwatseı,
Manthr gŏl tai mwatseı tseth,

Tsĕth gŏl tai keṅhti na kunei,
Shūnyas Shūnyāh milith gav.

तन्त्रं सर्वं लीयते मन्त्र एवं मन्त्रश्चिते लीयते नादमूलः ।
चित्ते लीने लीयते सर्वमेव दृश्यं दृष्ट्वा लीयते चित्स्वरूपः ॥

When the 'tantra' melts away, Mantra remains,
Mantra too disappears, leaving behind chitta,
When chitta dissolves, 'Nothing' remains,
The void is reabsorbed into the Void !

ह्यथकरिथ राज फेरिना
दिथ करिथ त्रप्ति ना मन
लूब बिना जीव मरिना
जीवन्तुय मरि तय सुय छुय ज्ञान ॥

Hĕth Karith rāj pherina,
Dith karith trapti na man;
Lūb vena zīv marina,
Zīvantai mari tai suy chhuy jñān.

दातुर्मनस्तृप्यति नैव राज्ये
दत्त्वा, ग्रहीतुश्च तदेव लब्ध्वा ।
जीवोऽपि लोभेन न मृत्युमेति
मृतस्य नैवास्ति न जातु मृत्युः ॥

Human mind is not satisfied even when a man ascends a throne and rules over a kingdom;
There is no satisfaction even in renunciation of power and place;
Without greed man will not die;
True knowledge lies in *dying while alive.*

इमय श्य च्य तिमय श्य म्य
श्यामगला च्य ब्योन तांठिस
यहोय ब्यनु-बोद च्य तु म्य
चु श्यन स्वामी बोह शयि मशिस ॥

Yimai shĕ tsĕ timai shĕ mê,
Shyāmagala tsĕ byŏn tathis,

Yŏhai bĕnabhid tsĕ ta mĕ
Tsa shén svāmi bŏh shĕyi mashis.

यदेव षट्कं ते देव तदेव च मम प्रभो ।
नियोक्ता त्वं नियोज्याहृ तस्यास्तीत्यावयोर्भिदा ॥

The very six that Thou hast are possessed by me too.
O God of the azure throat ! in a state of separation, I am sorely miserable.
The only difference, (though not the essential difference), lies in the fact,
Thou art master of the six, while I forgot myself the six.

शिव गुर तय कीशव पलुनस
ब्रह्मा पायर्यन ब्वलास्यस
यूगी यूग-कलि परज़ान्यस
कुस दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चड़यस ॥

Shiva Gur tai keshav palanas
Brahma pāyrĕn vŏlasĕs
Yūgi yūga kali parzānĕs
Kus Dīva ashwavār pĕṭh chĕdĕs (khŏtus) ?

शिवोऽश्व: केशवस्तस्य पर्याण्मात्मभूस्तथा ।
पादयन्त्र तत्र योग्य: सादी क: इति मे बद ।

Shiva is the horse and Keśav (Vishṇu) the saddle,
Brahma adorns the stirrups,
The yogi, by the art of yoga, recognizes Him.
Who is the god that rides the horse ?

अनाहृत ख-स्वरूप शून्यालय
यस नाव न वर्ण न गुथुर न रूप
अहं विमर्ष नादँ-ब्यंदुय यस वो न
सुय दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चड़्यस

Anāhata kha-swarūp shuñyālai
Yas nāv na varan na guthr na rūp
Aham vimarsha Nāda-Binduy yas vŏn,
Suy Dīva ashwavār pĕṭh cĕdes (khŏtus).

अनाहतः खस्वरूपः शून्यस्थो विगतामयः ।
अनामरूपवर्णोऽजो नादबिन्दवात्मकोऽस्ति सः ॥

It is the perpetual, unobstructed sound (Om), beyond time and space, permeating everything, the principle of absolute vacuity, whose abode is the Void (of the Sahasrāra),
Who has no name, no complexion, no pedigree and no form,
Who by Its own reflection on Itself emerges as 'I-ness',
First as the Sound and the Dot, and is called as such,
He is the God will mount the horse.

तूरि सलिल खोतु तय तूरे
ह्यमि त्रय गय ब्योन-अब्योन व्यमर्शा
चे तनि रव बाति सब समे
शिवुमय चराचर जग पश्या ॥

Tari Salila khota tai tarei,
Hĕmi trĕ gai byŏn-abyōn vĕmarsha;
Tsetani rav bhăti sab samei.
Shivamai tsrătsar zag pashya.

मायाजाड्यं तज्जडं बोधनीरं
ससृत्याख्यं तद्घनत्वं हिमं च ।
चित्सूर्योस्मिन प्रोदिते त्रीणि सद्यो
जाड्यान्मुक्तं नीरमाद्यं शिवाख्यम् ॥

Intense cold may freeze water (into ice) : may be into snow.
Reflecting, you find water differentiated into three forms :
But when the sun of Cetana (supreme Consciousness) dawns upon you, these again dissolve into one Cosmic Substance :
The universe of animate and inanimate beings is seen as Śiva.

अछयन आय त गछुन गछे
पकुन गछे द्यन किहो राथ
योरय आय त तूर्य गछुन गछे
कॅह नतु कॅह नतु कॅह नत क्याह ॥

Atshĕn āy ta gatshun gatshei
Pakun gatshei dĕn kiho rāth;

Yorai āy ta tūri gatshun gatshei;
Kĕnh na-ta kĕhn na-ta kĕnh na-ta kyāh ?

जराऽऽगता क्षीणतरोऽद्य देहो
जातोऽवसायो गमनाय कार्यः ।
समागताः सनो यत एव तत्र
गन्तव्यमेवेह दृढं न किञ्चित् ॥

We have been coming into existence continuously, and we cannot escape death;
It is inevitable to move on this path night and day.
We ought to go back to the place wherefrom we came.
There must be Something in this; otherwise what is (all this) ?

मूड ज़ांनिथ पशिथ त ओ॒न
को॒ल श्रुतुवुन ज़डरूपी आस
युस यी दपिय तस तीय बोज़
यो॒ह्यो॒य तत्त्व व्यविस छु॒य अब्यास ॥

Mūdh zánith pashith ta ŏṇ
Kŏl shrutuvun zad-rūpi ās,
Yus yih dapiy tas tiy bol (boz)
Yuhoy tattvavidis chhuy abhyās.

ज्ञात्वा सर्वं मूढ़वत्तिष्ट स्वस्थः
श्रुत्वा सर्वं श्रोत्रहीनेन भाव्यम् ।
दृष्ट्वा सर्वं तूर्णमन्धत्वमेहि
तत्त्वाभ्यासः कीर्तितोऽयं बुधेन्द्रै ॥

Though thou hast knowledge, be thou as a fool;
Though thou canst see, be thou as blind;
Though thou canst hear, be thou as dumb;
Be thou, as it were, a non-sentient block;
Tell others what they like you to say.
(or) Listen to whatever a person talks to you.
This is the wont of one who knows the 'Tattvas'.

ग्यन छ़्यज़ि त रज़न आसे
बूतल गगुनस कुन व्यकासे

चंद्र राहु-ग्रास मावसे
शिव-पू ज़ुन गौ चित्तात्मसे ॥

Děn tshězi ta razan āsei,
Bhūtal gaganas kun vikāsei,
Tsandar Rāhu-grās māvase;
Shiva pūzun gav cita-ātmasei.

नशे गतेऽर्के खलु मानसंज्ञे
मेयक्षयाख्या रजनी विभाति ।
जीवाख्यचन्द्र: शिवद्याम्नि लीन:
स्वाहन्त्वराहुं ग्रसते च सद्य: ॥

The Day will decline and the Night will cast its pall,
The Earth will stretch in one vast expanse to the sky !
Rahu (the demon of Eclipse) will swallow the Moon on Amāvasya,
(the last day of the dark-fortnight);
The worship of Śiva means becoming conscious of self.

श्य वन चटिथ शशिकल वुज़म
प्रकृथ हुं ज़ुम पवन सती
लोलकि नार वालिज बुज़म
शंकर लोबुम तमिय सूती ।

Shě van tsatith shěshikal vuzam,
Prakrat hunzam pavana sati;
Lolaki nāra valinj buzam,
Shankar lobum tamiy sati.

कमादिकं काननषट्कमेत
च्छित्त्वामृतं बोधमय मयाप्तम् ।
प्रणादिरोधात् प्रकृति च भक्त्या
मनश्च दाध्वा शिवधाम लब्धम् ॥

Crossing the six forests, came the Sheshikala oozing,
The Prakrti was sacrificed (burnt out) with the air (Prāṇa),
With the fire of Love I roasted my heart;
Thus was Śiva realized by me.

लूब मारुन सहज व्यचारून
द्रो ग ज़ानुन कल्पन त्राव
निशि छय तय दूर मो गारुन
शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गो ॥

Lūb mārun, Sahaz vetsārun,
Drŏg zānun kalpan trāv;
Nishi chhuy tai dūr mo gārun;
Shūnyas Shūnyah milith gav.

लोभे त्यक्त्वा वैमनस्यं च तद्वत्-
कार्यो नित्य स्वस्वभावावमर्श. ।
शून्याच्छून्यं नैव भिन्नं यथैवं
तस्मात्त्व तद्भेदबुद्धिर्वृथैव ॥

Give up imagining that the skill of killing (the demon of) desire, and meditating on the self are too costly to buy;
He stands close by you ! Do not look for Him far away.
The void was dissolved in the Void !

अकुय ॐकार युस नाबि दरे
क्वंबय ब्रह्माण्डस सुम गरे
अख सुय मन्त्र चेतस करे
तस सास मन्त्र क्याह् करे ॥

Akuy Oṃkār yus nābhi dharei,
Kumbhai Brahmāndas sum garei ;
Akh suy manthr tsĕtas karei,
Tas sās manthr kyāh karei.

आ ब्रह्माण्ड नाभितो येन नित्यम्
ओंकाराख्यो मन्त्र एको धृतोऽयम् ।
कृत्वा चित्तं तद्विमर्शैकसारं
किं तस्यान्यैर्मन्त्रवृन्दैर्विधियम् ॥

One who fixes up only one Word, Omkar, at the navel
And with the exercise of retained breath, makes a bridge (in one span from the navel) upto the Brahmānd,
And cons only that (Oṃkar) mantra,
A thousand mantras have no use for him.

Note :— Sanskrit Translations by Rajanaka Bhaskaracharya

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